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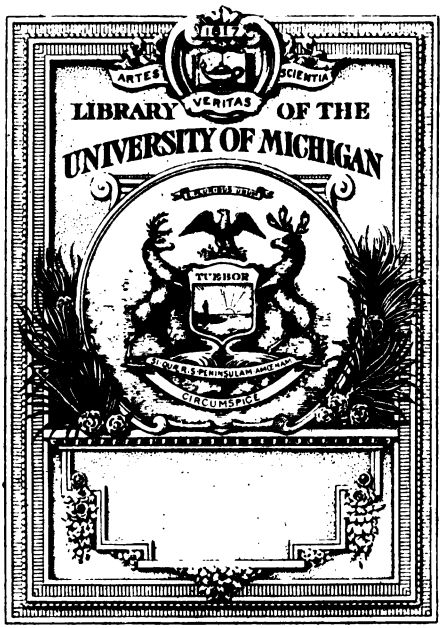
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MEMOIRS

OF

A LITERARY VETERAN;

INCLUDING

SKETCHES AND ANECDOTES

OF

THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LITERARY CHARACTERS
FROM 1794 TO 1849.

BY
R. P. GILLIES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS

OF

A LITERARY VETERAN.

CHAPTER I.

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES.—BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MANIA.—BRIEF SPECIMEN OF THE AUTHOR'S EARLY RHYMES. — MR. THOMAS THOMSON.—DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN. — JOHN BALLANTYNE AND CO.—BOOKS ON GHOSTS AND DEMONOLOGY.—RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. WILLIAM ERSKINE (LORD KINNEDDER).

I HAD by degrees adopted one leading object of research and labour, namely, bibliography. The acquisition of choice materials was, indeed, an amusement merely, though at that time rather an expensive one; but the elimination of novelty out of those old materials, the transmutation of lead into gold, or tracing out a vein hitherto unexplored in the bibliographical mine, required

somewhat of tact, pertinacity, and labour. Bibliographers were then divided into two classes; first, the small minority, with Sir Egerton Brydges for their leader, who followed the pursuit rationally from a sincere love of literature, desiring to bring to light forgotten gems, or historical and biographical *data*, also deriving inspiration and energy from their researches. But we had another class, a wealthy majority, useful also in their own way, among whom, luckily for booksellers, there had sprung up a kind of *mania* for purchasing black letter volumes, although the purchasers themselves, from year's end to year's end, did not read, far less write, fifty pages consecutively. Among such people, it must be owned, the bibliographical propensity, though it had, indirectly, good results, was nearly as absurd as the *ci-devant* "tulip-madness" in Holland; moreover, tricks were played off in the trade, almost as gross as that of the bold speculator at Amsterdam, who sprinkled ink from his pen over a common tulip, then took root and flower into the market as a matchless new species, for which he claimed and obtained a matchless price. The merest trash, mouldering tracts from which not a grain of wit or common sense could be extracted, nor having any interest whatsoever, except that of being old, were vamped up in fragrant Russia bindings,

and marked on the guard leaf "extremely rare." A tract of this class, purchased honestly for twopence, or obtained gratis from some old repertory as waste paper, would then readily find a customer in my Lord A., or Sir John B., at the moderate price of two or three guineas. It was rare, and, therefore, "curious," which was quite enough to justify the price. All this was like a mode of alchemy to those who understood the tricks of their trade, and the gullibility of the public in those days (how changed in this age of iron)! Constable laid in this way the foundation of his fame and fortune. He realized some thousands by old books alone; buying them at a price next to nothing, and selling them at enormous profit. And for some years he had the game almost entirely in his own hands, so that when Blackwood and others came on the field, his own purpose being already gained, he cared little whether the competition succeeded or failed.

My acquisitions in the black letter department were already considerable; but I recked not of them as curiosities merely, but as means to an end, namely, to original compositions founded on old models. During this year (1809) occurred an event excessively trifling in itself, yet of no little import in the life of an author, namely, my first publication (unless, perhaps, I must except

certain sonnets, &c., given to Dr. Anderson, and by him sent to Mr. Davenport, editor of "The Poetical Register"). I had addressed a letter (of course anonymously) to Sir Egerton Brydges, which he forthwith printed, and which appeared in the very next *livraison* of the "Ruminator," a series of essays accompanying the "Censura Literaria." The subject of my letter was the same which I afterwards expanded into a poem of three cantos, named, "Childe Alarique," to wit, the advantages of retirement, and the disappointments of a fantastic hero as to his estimate of our wise and enlightened world. I mention this early, and otherwise insignificant, production only to show how obstinately consistent I have been in my predilections from youth to age, this being a necessary datum or præmiss for any interest which an indulgent reader may be supposed to take in such portions of egotism as are unavoidable in these memoirs. Egotism may be very objectionable no doubt, nevertheless, as I have said in a former chapter, it is like the mud, straw, and mortar which are needed in building, and without it no autobiography will symmetrically hold together. Under these impressions, I shall transcribe here from my contributions to the "Poetical Register" for 1808, the following sonnet addressed to Sir Egerton.

TO A FAVOURITE AUTHOR.

Nor city toil, nor pomp, nor worldly pride
Can suit the workings of my weary mind;—
On these green banks I love to lie reclined,
Or wander slowly by the river's side:—
Oh thou, to whom I feel as if allied,
Whose voice has cheered my lonely pilgrimage,
Once more let me unfold thy magic page
Mid the deep shelter of this forest wide!
With thee, awhile be mine to mark the glow
Of evening on the northern hills decay;—
To watch the gradual shadows deeper grow,
As twilight's purple radiance melts away!
Still, Bard of Wootton! thine enchanting lay
Heightens each joy that Nature's charms bestow.

And from a certain "Ode to the Muse," in the same repertory, I shall select a few lines, after which I may conclude that the reader has had *satis superque* of my juvenile rhymes.

There are, who view the rising morn
With golden tints the hills adorn;
There are who mark the glow of Heaven,
And all the enchanting gleams of Even,
And yet, alas, no transport meet,
No rapture in the scenery sweet.
But thou hast taught me to descry
In every path new ecstasy;
There seems a visionary light
Thrown o'er each object of my sight;
In every summer breath that blows,
The tide of inspiration flows;
The flocks and waving pastures fair
That wanton in that summer air;
The village spire but dimly seen
With many a shadowy grove between;

Or trembling tints of fading day
That on the river's bosom play;
The mists of night that slowly sail
Through the damp wood and lowly vale;
All wake for me enchantments new
That meet no other mortal's view!

I believe that no one ever succeeded to landed property with more heartfelt wishes than mine were, to cleave to and cultivate hereditary acres. Accordingly, I now varied my pursuits by reading all the books I could muster about agriculture, horticulture, forest trees and landscape gardening. But of these, the latter were out of sight my favourites; and henceforward my best amusement consisted in planting trees, or in pruning and thinning the woods, on which account, a return to Edinburgh next winter at the very season proper for such operations, was especially disagreeable. As usual, the die was cast, and turned up against me. I had to wear out another half year in town, of which time few traces remain that are worth recording.

With obstinate perseverance I kept up my old habit of labouring assiduously, but not rationally. The important question, *cui bono?* or of a middle term of sufficient force to bear out the conclusion, entered not into my catechism. As to bibliography, I had indeed always the vague hope of being able to revive entirely-forgotten treasures from days long past, and in this pursuit found a

most indulgent and kind friend in Mr. Thomas Thomson, advocate and deputy keeper of the Register Office, and now one of the principal Clerks of Session. In the capacity either of sonnetteer or bibliographer, it would have been impossible for any one to look otherwise than with profound respect on the writings and character of our Scottish Petrarch, Drummond of Hawthornden. He was indeed an especial object of admiration and imitation both of mine, and of my friend Dr. Black. As in the folio edition of Drummond's works it is recorded, that he presented or bequeathed all his library and manuscripts to the Edinburgh College, the question very naturally occurred to me, what had since become of those treasures? Did the college now acknowledge possession of them? Had they been conserved separately as befitted the respect due to such a donor?

No sooner did this thought occur to me than I ran to cross-question the sub-librarian, believing firmly that so important a purpose as the resuscitation of Drummond's books and papers would at once be understood and appreciated. But alas, the worthy official was quite unprepared for my queries, never having heard the like before. All he could do was to have recourse to the catalogue, and, if I recollect right, all that he found entered

there under the name of Drummond, were two early editions of the poet's works, the former in quarto, a beautiful book with bordered pages (of which, as it is very rare, I afterwards wished to print a fac-simile), the latter a duodecimo with portrait, which is yet easily attainable. Expressing my disappointment in no measured terms, I was assured by the *sub* that during the whole of his attendance there, which had been long, he had never before been applied to on the subject of Drummond, or his bequest. Indeed if the question had been tried, how many individuals then resident at Edinburgh would have taken interest in this discussion, I suspect the answer would have been very discouraging. As usual, I felt myself isolated and alone, but with great exultation before leaving the library I succeeded in bringing to light two copies of a certain thin quarto, being the first printed catalogue of the books and manuscripts of which I came in search. That these treasures *ought* to exist and be within reach for consultation, was consequently established beyond a doubt, and armed with this proof I had recourse to Dr. Andrew Duncan, junior, one of the most laborious and persevering of scientific men, who resided in the vicinity, and who, to the best of my remembrance, then acted as librarian.

The result was an appointment for a meeting

next day at the College, whither I was cheerfully accompanied by Mr. Thomson, and where Dr. Duncan and Professor Leslie were waiting to receive us. The former was quite aware of the fact that in "days of lang syne" the poet's books had been arranged separately in a repertory still known to the initiated as Drummond's press, and which, being above a doorway, was accessible only by the step-ladder. Professor Leslie, as a member of the *senatus academicus*, was the first to mount the steps and try his fortune; but finding nothing to interest him, soon *gave in*. Each of us rummaged in turn, but with one solitary exception, the rarities specified in Drummond's catalogue were sought for in vain. I was the fortunate discoverer of this unique article, namely, a MS. of Scottish poems collected in the sixteenth century, by Sir W. Maitland, of Ledington, which Mr. Thomson immediately applied himself to decipher. Professor Leslie thought it might be well if the senatus would accord a salary to a competent person who would examine and report upon the manuscript department of the library, to which I eagerly responded that, instead of requiring a salary, I was most willing to pay any reasonable sum for being allowed the privilege of continuing my researches, and of rummaging *ad libitum*. But, as might be predicted, this unlooked for pro-

position was heartily laughed at, and it seems possible enough that from that date to the present hour, the subject of Drummond and his bequest has never been debated within the college walls.

During this winter my best resource, out of doors, was the newly established bookselling and publishing house of John Ballantyne and Co., where I became a welcome visitor, and where Sir Walter Scott, though not ostensibly, was patron and director. The house was *utrumque paratus* as bibliographers and publishers. It soon became an agreement betwixt Mr. Ballantyne and myself, that whenever there occurred a fresh arrival of old treasures, I should be present at the unpacking of the boxes, and make my own selection, only with this caveat, that if any "witch-books" came in the way, these were to be put aside for Sir Walter Scott. Under this generic title he ranked all books and tracts, not only relating to witches, but to dæmonology, ghosts, apparitions, warnings, prophecies, &c., having for a long time been sedulous to form a large collection in this department, with a view to compose, one day, an original work on the subject. But from one cause or another, the plan was deferred until more than twenty years afterwards, when the evil days had come, and when with broken health, and faltering spirits, he put together a volume on the subject.

The collected materials were all within his grasp, but the genial spirit was gone that formerly would have animated the dulness of his authorities, and transmuted their lead into gold.

Among my own acquisitions, that year, was the second folio edition of the works of Shakspeare, which, wanting a leaf, I obtained at the excessively low price of only fourteen guineas. Had any one reminded me that I possessed already divers editions of Shakspeare, and that for every rational purpose a copy at the rate of so many shillings instead of pounds would have sufficed, he would, of course, have been looked upon as a hopeless barbarian. It was about this epoch when for the first, second, and third editions of Shakspeare, all perfect and arranged together, Messrs. Constable and Co. drew the convenient price of five hundred guineas, as already recorded in my third chapter, under *memorabilia* of the laird of Bonnymune. Bibliomania, whilst it was a natural effect of the revolution, already mentioned, in our literary taste, became also a powerful cause of the continued reaction. Demand led to supply, and thus veritable treasures were brought to light and life, which otherwise would have remained in oblivion. We thus obtained, by degrees, new editions, not only of Beaumont and Fletcher (whose original folio had become rare), but of Jonson, Marston, Mar-

low, Shirley, Ford, and others, who, after all, are much more justly appreciated in Germany than they ever have been in their own country. *Fac similes* were prepared to gratify those who desired but could not obtain original editions,—and in this way good service was rendered by a certain Mr. R. Triphook, of London, of whose palingenesia, specimens may still be found at the book-stalls. One of the most interesting of his reprints was a *fac simile* of the first edition of Hamlet, which, when compared with the usual copy, amply proves that our greatest of English poets did not omit the labour of correction, on the contrary, that he even subjected his work to a process of recomposition before giving it finally out of his hands to live "for all time."

Among the numberless literary schemes entertained by Ballantyne and Co. was that of an Edinburgh Annual Register, and I was not a little flattered when the publisher requested that I would contribute some verses to the poetical department, which accordingly was done, in the shape of a pitiful "Ode to the River Northesk," and an elegy, which I afterwards saw copied into an album under the facetious title of "Fragment of a Miserable." Next year, I contributed a string of stanzas entitled "Glenfinlas;" and in the year following, it suited the publisher's purpose (for

mystification) that I should be suspected, or credited, as the author of a fragment entitled the "Vision of Triermain," written by Sir Walter Scott, and, strange to tell, the honour was fixed on me for some time, by readers whose discrimination was obviously not over acute.—See the Life of Sir Walter Scott, chap. xxv. p. 236. (8vo edition, 1845).

In those days how limited was the number of literary men, and now they are numberless! It seems to me that more new publications have issued from the press within this last month of November than in 1809 would have served for the whole year. Moreover, take the penny papers alone of our present epoch, and I believe that they will be found to comprise within a single month more of orginal (or *soi-disant* original) writing than would have sufficed for all the journals of 1809 during six months. The force of mechanical science seems transfused into our literature. We manufacture our books and essays at railroad speed, and by high pressure; only in one department, viz., metaphysical science, including morals and logic, it must be owned that we lag and blunder most wofully.

Among literary characters who frequented the house of Ballantyne and Co., next to Sir Walter Scott, by far the most eminent in my estimation,

was Mr. William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder. Truly, the amount of his acknowledged writings was little enough whereon to found reputation, for, in so far as I know, his name never was prefixed to more than some stanzas additional to Collins's "Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands." But in my long life I have never met with any one more thoroughly sincere in his attachment to literature and to poetry in particular, than Lord Kinnedder. His sensibility was most acute, so that not only did he become a most fastidious critic, uncompromising in his censure and demands for correction, but on the same principle he discovered and selected whatever was praiseworthy in compositions which ordinary readers would have passed over as insipid. He ranked among the rare examples of a man voluntarily sacrificing his own favourite pursuits for a profession which could have no other recommendation in his eyes but that it afforded a better chance than literature for the support of his family. He had but a moderate share of employment at the bar; but he was steadfast therein, and scrupulous in his attention to any case which he had once undertaken. He even argued in favour of his profession, and contended that literature ought to be regarded only as an amusement and solace after the day's work was done.

Lord Kinnedder was one of the kindest and most unalterable of my friends; and if I had understood and followed his good advice, my voyage of life would probably have been of a very different description. Either as barrister or judge, he mingled very little with society at Edinburgh, and our acquaintance was accidental. For some time I was in the habit of sending essays in prose and verse to John Ballantyne for consideration, and one of these, a fragment in the Spenserian stanza, fell under his Lordship's inspection.* His usual tact for stigmatizing faults, and encouraging whatever seemed praiseworthy, was exercised. The copy was returned to me with divers notes made upon it in red ink, and at the end, a summary opinion, commencing with the words: "The author of these lines is no ordinary man." It may, perhaps, argue some vanity on my part to repeat this, but the record is made with a better motive, namely, to show how willing and good-natured the critic was, in the discovery of merits, as well as acute and relentless in censuring the defects of any poetical essay.

My first visit at Lord Kinnedder's house took place one afternoon, when, having come fagged and weary from the Parliament House to Ballantyne's, he proposed that I should walk home-

* Printed, I think, with the first edition of "Childe Alarique."

wards with him, the object being, that he should read aloud to a willing auditor, an old production of Sir Walter Scott, of which he possessed the only copy (The "House of Aspen"). To read aloud, and render justice to the author is, I believe, a rare art, which Lord Kinnedder possessed in a high degree. He read with the most vivid appreciation of sentiment, with the most perfect *naiveté*, yet seldom or never broke down from sympathy with an affecting passage, as Dugald Stewart used to do.

I believe that no literary man was ever more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of home-life, of *domesticity* and world-exclusion than William Erskine. He submitted to daily attendances in the Parliament House, and accepted the cases proffered to him as a barrister, not from love of distinction or wealth, but solely that he might have means enough whereby to keep his *lares et penates* inviolate and undisturbed. He could not be, and never was, a man of the world, consequently never became popular. He patiently enslaved himself to a certain extent, but retained an independent freehold in his own mind, of which no change could deprive him, and this he cherished, as he did his favourite books and manuscripts, which were all carefully locked up, and concealed in cases covered with wirework and green silk; no

books whatsoever, except the usual folios and quartos for legal practice, being visible in his study.

It was impossible that such a man could become a popular character. He did not mistrust or dislike the convivial circles of Edinburgh, but he cared not for them, thought not of them, and was rarely to be met with therein. Besides, when he did appear, if nothing particular occurred to interest him, he would remain immitigably and imperturbably silent, with his eyes fixed on vacancy, as if his thoughts were far away, or as if thought was, *pro tem.*, suspended, which perhaps was true. Visibly he mixed with our Edinburgh world in so far as he was a member of the College of Justice, and at last a judge, but I doubt whether, in the full sense of the words, he ever belonged to the said world at all. Certainly no one ever moved therein who had less affinity therewith, and when at last, its closer acquaintance was suddenly forced upon him, death broke off the connexion.

Mr. Erskine's first promotion was to be sheriff of Orkney, a county which he delighted to visit, telling me how interesting were its remnants of old castles, its legendary lore, and antediluvian manners. At length the independence for which he had laboured, was secured to him by his appointment to be one of the ordinary Lords of Session.

I never forget how cordial and cheerful was our meeting in 1822, when, after a year's absence in Germany, I met him returning from the court, and expressed my heartfelt congratulations on his new dignity. But this most amiable man was not without enemies. As already said, he cared not for our world, and seemingly it repaid him for his neglect by hatred. Slanderous tongues assailed him, like the poisoned weapons of masked assassins, and to William Erskine their attacks proved mortal, for these lent double strength to an illness which otherwise might easily have been surmounted. There are people who will insist that this argued moral weakness, and that the more a man is calumniated, vilified, and aspersed, the more steadfast in his purposes he ought to be. Granted! "*ought* to be!" provided all characters were alike. According to such doctrine, Hamlet ought to have retained perfect sanity and equanimity, ought to have made a mere jest of the "old mole that worked i' the dark," and upon sound utilitarian principles, have contributed to uphold the dignity of the existing crown, instead of making a disturbance, as he did, like a *faiseur d'embarras*. But unluckily for this wise doctrine, there are discrepancies of character; and in certain cases, where the consciousness of integrity is most perfect, the con-

sciousness also that one lives in a world where a defence against the foul attacks of calumny is needed and called for, becomes insupportable. It is impossible to avoid inferring that the society by whom rancorous aspersions are believed, circulated, and cherished, is not very deserving of confidence or respect; on the contrary, that there must be somewhat "rotten in its estate." Lord Clive felt all this when our English world turned against him, when emotions of contempt and rage choked his utterance, and he resolved to quit for ever a sphere which he could not help feeling was unworthy of him, or for which he, at all events, was unfitted.

In the autumn of 1822, all Scotland was roused into a state of furor of excitement by a most memorable event. To wit, that most excellent monarch George IV., acquiesced in the ordeal of being brought down in his royal yacht to Scotland, where he resided for a week, submitting there to become a show and *spectacle* to the people in the afternoons, but stipulating that he should be allowed to pass his evenings at Dalkeith House in quiet. In that epoch of commotion and general festivity Lord Kinnedder died.

During the course of an anxious and troubled life, how often and how deeply I have lamented his loss! He was a thoroughly sincere friend,

whose good will was not to be shaken by the winds and waves of adverse chance, or by evil tongues. Nor have I ever known any one more free than William Erskine from that social (or antisocial?) habit which is not very rare at Edinburgh, namely, gibing and *girding* as it is called, or detraction. Even in his capacity of literary critic, as already shown, he was as anxious to discover merits, as to find fault. And in his estimate of character among those who surrounded him, he noticed only the favourable traits, or when such were deficient, he remained silent, and would not even give his opinion. Such was in disposition the man whom the effects of a groundless slander, a mere tea-table gossip, broke in spirit, and hurried into the grave.

* * * *

My *penchant* for collecting old pictures, as well as old books, has already been noticed. To these pursuits in the spring of 1810, I added that of landscape painting. I thought, and not without reason, that it would be possible to copy good pictures in a tolerable manner; and very zealously became a student at the class-room of a praiseworthy artist, who advised that for the next three months or more, I should think of nothing but drawing outlines on scientific principles. Unluckily, however, I tired of this course within

three days, and having a spare apartment, fitted it up as a painting room with easel, palette, colours, brushes, and canvas. It was the old story over again, labour without rational foundation, the result of which proved no better than twisting ropes of sand. With my teacher's help, I did succeed in copying two or three pictures passably well; but it is needless to add, that on my return to the country, when I tried to progress without that advantage, the pursuit turned out a failure, and was abandoned.

CHAPTER II.

THE REV. CHARLES MATURIN.—HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR WALTER SCOTT.—ORIGINAL MS. OF "BERTRAM."—CASTLE BUILDING AND FOX-HUNTING. — PUBLICATION OF SCOTT'S "LADY OF THE LAKE."—ITS UNPARALLELED SUCCESS.

In those days one of my favourite and most cherished authors was the Rev. Charles Maturin, author of "Montorio," the "Wild Irish Boy," the "Milesian," "Melmoth the Wanderer," the "Albigenses," "Bertram," a tragedy, the "Universe," a poem, and divers other works. I reckon up their names because I suspect that in this age of iron, even his own name is nearly obliterated. He was indeed like a meteor, whose light passes over a drowsy world, by some few watched and wondered at, but by the majority unappreciated or altogether unnoticed.

Sir Walter Scott and Lord Kinnedder were among the few who watched that light; in plainer terms, they perceived that Maturin had extraordinary power, which properly disciplined and encouraged, might raise him to a high grade in the

literary world. For my own part, I thought and felt convinced that his romances were not only something quite new, but in their original strength unequalled. It seemed to me a matter almost of indifference what was the story of Maturin's book, provided only it afforded him situations of anxiety and distress. It was in the pertinacious details, the relentless force with which the author conceived and imparted emotions of gloom, and suffering, and despondency, that his principal merit consisted. Up to the present hour I think that in this department he is unrivalled, unless it be by Godwin in certain portions of "Caleb Williams" and "St. Leon." However, our enlightened public were not over partial to such productions. Maturin, with his wild romances and tragedies, found himself in a sphere where travesties and farces would have succeeded far better, but he had chosen his walk, and excelled in it. Consequently, though he gained no pecuniary profits by "Montorio" and the "Wild Irish Boy," yet Mr. Colburn did at last venture the vast sum of 80*l.* for the "Milesian," and I suppose somewhat accrued to him also for "Melmoth" and the "Albigenses."

But in short, Maturin, notwithstanding his extraordinary powers, scarcely gained by all his productions ("Bertram" excepted) so much as would maintain his family in comfort for a single

year. So true it is that poverty perpetuates poverty, and that in order to secure favour with the British public, one must be completely independent of its frowns or smiles.

Sir Walter Scott usually received 8,000*l.* at least, instead of 80*l.* for a single romance; and even in this age of iron, Sir E. Bulwer Lytton can draw 1,600*l.* for a production, which however meritorious, if brought into the market by a poor man, would not even find a publisher bold enough to defray the expense of printing.

Not being personally acquainted with Maturin, I have introduced him principally for the sake of reviving once more a circumstance which at the time made a deep impression on my mind. All the world of authors in those days aimed at correspondence with Sir Walter Scott, and among the rest Maturin, by a letter in which he described himself as an "obscure Irishman," desirous to learn from the highest authority whether there might be any chance that booksellers in the "Modern Athens" would afford him that encouragement and support which he had vainly sought in his own country and at London. Is there any *one* eminent author of our present epoch who, *mutatis mutandis*, would return a kind and considerate answer to such a letter? (I think I do know *one* such, but not more!) Very certain it is,

however, that Walter Scott replied in the most friendly terms, and as he did not see any immediate way of driving a bargain with the only publisher at Edinburgh who had either money or credit, his letter enclosed 50*l.* as a "trifling" token of his esteem and sympathy, and as a temporary stop-gap till times should grow better.

I have elsewhere recorded my recollections of Sir Walter Scott, in whose character the transcendent merits so infinitely over-balanced any existing alloy of defects, that my impressions of the latter were obliterated utterly. In the words of his friend William Erskine, "no being was ever more entirely free than Scott from even the slightest feelings of envy, jealousy, or censoriousness, in regard to brother authors." Instead of wishing to crush rising merit, as is too often the case among the *genus irritabile*, he sincerely entered into the aims and prospects of deserving aspirants, and would have been glad to uphold and direct them.

My reader will hardly suspect me of attaching over importance to a gift of 50*l.* No; it was the *animus*, the kind and brotherly sentiment that prompted and accompanied the gift, which dwelt in my recollection, as an illustrative *trait* of a character admirable in all the relations of life. The circumstance, trifling in itself, probably never would have been known, had it not been for my

anxious wish and earnest request to see the handwriting of Maturin, in compliance with which Scott one day put into my hands the only letters of his which he had then received.

The correspondence thus begun was continued in after years. The original MS. of the once popular tragedy of "Bertram" was transmitted to Sir Walter Scott for consideration, and by him entrusted to me in order that I might return it with a well-pondered decisive opinion! It was then of great length, and more like a German dramatic poem of the "romantic school" than a tragedy for the English stage. A certain "black knight of the forest" was made to act a very important part, being the manager and instigator of that series of crimes which are perpetrated within a few hours. I delighted in this "black knight," and would rather that the poem should never be tried on the stage at all, than part with him; a decision which greatly diverted Sir Walter Scott.

"Perhaps you have overlooked," said he, "that our friend in Dublin has neither 'two gowns' to keep him warm, nor any patrimonial acres to rest upon. His object decidedly is to have 'Bertram' brought on the stage, in order that it may succeed there and make money. Now, the 'black knight,' saving your presence, being in plain terms the devil, there is great reason to doubt whether our

very wise and respectable public will quietly endure his appearance under any name. They will probably think that his introduction on the boards is taking much too great a liberty either with him or with them, and in either case will feel offended, so that the performance, *malgré* all its merits, will be condemned and lost."

The fate of this production is somewhat remarkable. John Kemble did condescend to read it, and as it violently trangressed what he considered indispensable rules of propriety, he ruthlessly judged that it should be committed to the flames. He was at one and the same time quite in the right and quite in the wrong. Eventually the devil, *alias* "black knight," was cashiered, the drama condensed within moderate bounds, and accepted for the stage; where, with Kean's help as hero (who cared not a rush about John Kemble's rules of propriety), it had an extraordinary run, and brought 400*l.* or 500*l.* to the author.

In this manner Fortune made a run-away knock at his door, leaving with him, it is true, the aforesaid temporary notice of her favour, whereupon Maturin launched out as if he had at last struck upon the right vein of an inexhaustible mine. He did not precisely think that the sum of 500*l.* was inexhaustible, but felt extremely sure that, before it was all spent, he could prepare another drama

quite as good as the former. And he did so, but our wise public would not have it at any price; it was not condemned, but it failed nevertheless, and during the short remainder of his days Fortune too evidently had forgotten him altogether. I believe she never came to his door again.

So far as I am personally concerned the year 1810 might be passed over in silence. I was in ill health; I had my own crotchetty plans, all founded less or more on the præmiss of retirement and literary pursuits. I had nothing to do with the world, except as a looker on; yet I might very well write a long chapter on the change in phases which society had undergone during the last fifteen years. The matter of course was the same; the form had altered notably.

During the lapse of sixteen years, viz., from 1794 till 1810, divers new fashions had sprung up in the North, not indeed new in themselves, but in degree; take for example castle-building and fox hunting, upon which no expense was considered too great.

By whom the fashion of castle-building was introduced or *led off* in the North, I do not remember, but divers examples of it occurred in quick succession, followed in some cases by a train of other events, such as the embarrassment of the proprietors and their abdication of the grand fortresses

not long after their completion. I fancy it was the beginning of a rage for building, which has not died away like the mania for black letter, but continued to spread ever since. The poor good foxhounds might be cashiered and transferred into other keeping when their owner grew tired of their music, or found that their complicated tails became too costly; but once enter into a contract with Mr. Gillespie Grahame, Mr. Paterson, or any other architect of high professional dignity, and the result was very different. These were not only men of genius, but rigid sticklers for justice; and irrespective of profits, they were naturally jealous of their own reputation: consequently, and in the stern spirit of justice, they "would have their bond," and the castle once begun must be finished, and of course paid for to the very last tower and pinnacle, otherwise "an action for damages" would ensue.

Soon after my return to the country that year occurred an event which, in my estimation, made a distinguished era or epoch, viz., the publication of Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake." John Ballantyne despatched my copy per mail, along with some choice old tracts, which he rightly thought would be acceptable. It is impossible to express what importance I attached to this quarto volume, with its resplendent fragrant leaves and

matchless type: the finest specimen that had yet been seen of the Ballantyne press. The author was then in the very zenith of his poetical powers, for surely "the Lady" was the very best among his longer and more sustained efforts. As a long ballad, or lay of the Minstrel, it remains, and probably will for ever remain, unequalled. The work evinces so much of natural and vivid feelings, and such perfect adherence to truth and life in the delineation both of scenes and characters, that the reader is more than compensated for absence of that superior guise of mystery which attends the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," or of the more complicated web of plot in "Marmion." I wrote at this time two or three stanzas as a humble tribute of admiration, which I believe were often reprinted; but though I could still write other verses with similar intent, I could not recal those to memory *now*, if for so doing I were promised a crown and kingdom.

The copyright of this poem was estimated at 4000*l.*, and in truth its success was unprecedented. The necessity of having it to read for fashion's sake precluded borrowing in many instances. It was a kind of disgrace, a losing of *caste*, not to possess it. But it found numberless intelligent, as well as fashionable readers. More especially were young hearts gained by this metrical story, for in it there

was nothing which they could not understand. On the contrary, there was much which they had themselves perceived and felt, yet were not able to express, nor had heard expressed before. Of this I remember one very remarkable instance, but time presses and I must not dwell on it.

In the autumn of that year a degree of homage was paid to the poet, such as has never been manifested before nor since. All the world, rich and poor, including crown-princes and *noblesse*, crowded to visit the scenery which he had depicted. Instead of being, as usual, a dull, stupid village, whose inhabitants were all in a state of *cabbageism*, Callander of Monteith became a rallying point for all classes, a place wherein to study varieties of character. Truly *that* study was not very consolitary or edifying. Owing to accidental circumstances, I spent three months of the year 1810 in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine, but of society or characters noticed there, have little or nothing to record. Certain portions of the scenery remain ever vivid in my remembrance, especially Loch Vennachar, Benvoirlich, with its grey rocks fringed with birch and hazel, the heights immediately above Callander, and the view therefrom; these are pleasant recollections, the rest fades away like a dream, and my *precious* verses belonging to the period, (unless it be "Glenfinlas," in the "Edin-

burgh Annual Register") are all lost. I returned home in October, and being more than ever indisposed for a town life, busied myself during three months in pruning, thinning, and planting trees. About Christmas, however, with great reluctance I went to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER III.

RECOLLECTIONS OF SIR BROOKE BOOTHBY. — LORD PRESIDENT BLAIR. — VISCOUNT MELVILLE. — SIR WALTER SCOTT. — HIS CONDESCENSION TO LITERARY ASPIRANTS.—DON RODERICK.— JAMES HOGG (NOT THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD).—THE AUTHOR NO SOONER BECOMES OF AGE THAN HE RUNS INTO DEBT.— HIS MOTIVES THERETO.

The winter of 1810-11 was desperately severe. Having become a confirmed invalid, I was more than ever reluctant to leave home and give up my favourite amusement of wood-pruning, an employment by which the severest cold of a winter's day is set completely at defiance. But at Christmas time I removed to Edinburgh, and when there was obliged to occupy apartments at a hotel, because the new town was so crowded that no private lodging could be had for any money. That year (1811) turned out to be memorable in my life, inasmuch as, by means of a trifling event which shall be duly noted in this chapter, it influenced my fate and fortunes for ever afterwards.

In regard to literary pursuits and acquisitions that year, by far the most important occurrence in

my estimation, was my acquaintance made at hap-hazard with Sir Brooke Boothby, whence resulted an intercourse constantly kept up during the next seven or eight years.

At Edinburgh, Sir Brooke's habits were insulated and secluded—in his own phrase, he had done with the world, and his best philosophy seemed to consist in forgetting it altogether. He had moved for some part of his life among the gayest of the gay—he now saw no one but the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton, Lord Buchan, and Mr. (now Sir George) Sinclair, who all sought after him in his retirement. According to my peculiar notions, Sir Brooke was the most interesting of all characters whom I had yet met with, seeing that he lived for his literary pursuits alone, perfectly heedless of the world's opinion, or what became of his productions, and might truly say, "*labor ipsa voluptas erat.*" Over and above all this must be remembered his being the author of poems which in a particular department of the art are, for exquisite melody, classical correctness, and pathos, quite unrivalled: I mean the folio collection entitled, "Sorrows sacred to the Memory of Penelope."

Sir Brooke's mode of life was thought eccentric at Edinburgh;—he usually retired to rest at eight or nine o'clock; he rose invariably and break-

fasted, both summer and winter, betwixt four and five; he dined at two, and having finished his literary tasks before dinner, usually betook himself thereafter to his water-colour drawings. This division of time was the same which he had adopted long ago at Weimar; where, instead of being eccentric, it was in perfect accordance with general habits in that capital. But when I first knew him, he was not the slave of habit, but at my intercession would occasionally accept an invitation to dinner at six, when his unaffected manners and genial spirit completely triumphed for the moment over that prejudice which his recluse life naturally excited in our enlightened but censorious "modern Athens."

My first acquaintance with Sir Brooke arose from the accidental circumstance that I was called on, at the Speculative Society, to open a debate about the war against the French republic, in 1792, and wished especially to obtain an argumentative pamphlet which he published at the period in question. I applied to him accordingly, but the author could as easily have resuscitated the archives of King Cheops from the pyramids, as any of his own productions. After they were composed and finished they drifted from his grasp, and he thought of them no more. But the pamphlet was eventually found at the

Advocates' Library; and for my behoof at the moment, Sir Brooke, with great readiness and good humour, noted down the principal arguments against the commencement of that war, which had for twenty years continued to rage; arguments in the truth of which he had as unalterable confidence in 1811 as he had in 1790.

Sir Brooke was an admirable critic, and cultivated literature in all its branches, those only of the physical and exact sciences excepted. But he now wrote only *pour se distraire*, or as a sedative; therefore troubled himself little with original composition. After publishing at Edinburgh two volumes of metrical fables, he gave himself *con amore* to a new translation of Horace, in which he made daily unremitting progress. He undertook the task, I suppose, for the sake of its difficulty; and as to the question when it would be completed and published (or if ever) felt perfectly indifferent. Indeed, to have reflected on that point would have argued some regard for the goings on of the outward world, which, as already said, he preferred to forget altogether. He seemed to move in it, but kept all the while conveniently aloof and in a sphere of his own.

During forty-five years of observation, I have noted again and again, that there is no sort of offence or injury which our most excellent world

treats with such rancorous resentment as that consisting in contempt, whether real or supposed. Anger will be forgiven where contempt never is. Sir Egerton Brydges, in his novels, introduced in the back-ground some very paltry characters as country neighbours of his hero. Every cap found a wearer, who swore "*that* was levelled at me," and repaid the author by the most immitigable spite. In a narrow sphere like that of Edinburgh, provincial as that of the pettiest German court, if a visitor happens to sojourn, who, though well known by reputation, dares to decline knowing his neighbours, and to prefer his own habits to theirs, the risk is inevitable that he will be suspected of entertaining an unpardonable contempt for the society by whom he is surrounded, and be rancorously sneered at in consequence. A good share of this amiable, gentleman-like and Christian spirit was evinced towards Sir Brooke. The plea of ill health and advancing age availed him little, as he looked well and was able to walk out daily.

Sir Brooke's personal memoirs, had he thought of writing them, would doubtless have been interesting, for he had seen much of so-called "life," in its varieties, firstly in his early days at Lausanne and Geneva, where he made acquaintance with the far-famed literati of those romantic regions, but more especially with Rousseau, in

whose character he preferred to select all the favourable traits, such as they were, and subdued the bad into shade. This preference, as he owned, had arisen from his having first perused the now-forgotten "Heloise," in the midst of that scenery to which the author so eloquently refers, and been thereby so favourably impressed that he could as little forget the book as the woods, lakes, and mountains of Lausanne. Secondly, during his life in London, after his return from the Continent, at which period his accomplishments and stedfast adherence to the liberal party brought him into *rapport* with the most distinguished members of the literary and political world. At that time, also, he was looked up to and courted by the fantastic literary club at Lichfield, among whom (or rather among their visitors) he failed not to select Dr. Carey, the translator of Dante, as a character of a different stamp and of sterling worth. Thirdly, after his return to the Continent, when he visited divers German courts, sojourning longest at Weimar, where he was in habits of daily intercourse with Goethe, who spoke to me of Sir Brooke with the kindest and liveliest recollection twenty-six years afterwards. Among the various eccentric or eminent characters with whom he had been especially well acquainted abroad and at home, were Queen Caroline, Lord

Nelson, and Lady Hamilton. The longest letters I ever happened to meet with in Nelson's own hand-writing were those addressed by him to Sir Brooke, sometimes followed up by a postscript in a sad scrawling style from "Maria."

Characters which are in themselves the most decided and unaffected are of course the least liable to be changed and deteriorated by advancing age. Sir Brooke had retired from the world without sourness or misanthropy, and in his retreat he was as ready to be attracted by any new literary work, or to shout *vivat* in favour of any modern author as the youngest of his few associates. Accordingly, he had taken great interest in the progress of Sir Walter Scott, and readily accepted my proposal of a meeting *chez moi* at dinner with "our great man," which took place accordingly, and which proved so satisfactory that it led to other meetings of the same convivial character. At my suggestion, too, he accepted an invitation to meet the poet at John Ballantyne's, and heartily entered into the humour of the hour, rejoicing specially in the trios and duetts which were sung after dinner. No one who knew Sir Walter, will fail to remember his admirable convivial powers, or the quaint good humour, utterly *sans pretension*, by which these were animated. No sooner had he taken his place at table

than by some *naïf* remark, not addressed to any one in particular, he usually effected the utter demolition of "starch," and, without having once in all his life ever *aimed* at saying a "good thing," produced more mirth and joviality then any professional wit or punster ever could. He was so decided an enemy to "starch," or pretension of any kind, that it became invariably decomposed in his presence, and he cared not of what platitudes or "merry-andrada's" he served himself to effect that purpose. Only once, and at his own table, he felt surprised and overthrown. Telling *more suo*, or wishing to tell some brief anecdote from his own stores of recollection, he happened, about mid-way, to interpose the words: "Now whether it occurred from my own stupidity or because—" The break was fatal, and the anecdote to this hour remains untold, for in rushed most unexpectedly a regular man of starch, a *soi-disant* poet, rejoicing in the euphonious name of **********. "Oh Sir Walter!" solemnly exclaimed this worthy, "don't say that! No one can admit for a moment the plea of YOUR stupidity." This was too much. The mighty minstrel changed countenance, drooping his under jaw in a manner that would have done honour to Grimaldi; but instantly he sought refuge and protection against his literary guest from an honest Leith wine-mer-

chant, who never in his life had perused one page of poetry, earnestly craving from this worthy an opinion as to the merits of a bottle of rare old Madeira, whereupon the critic, applying a Bardolfian nose to the *bouquet*, pronounced favourably, and with great *gusto*. It was easy, then, to begin another yarn, though one story had been strangled, and the man of starch was left alone in his glory.

Of course, it was impossible to live at Edinburgh and overlook the genius of Scott; but not till after the year 1814, except by extracts, did Sir Brooke become acquainted with Wordsworth. During one of our many walks together, he inquired whether I did not think that his poems were often childish, and their subjects very ill-chosen; to which I answered sweepingly that one subject was as good as another in the hands of a veritable poet, and that to resuscitate the feelings and impressions of childhood, and to perpetuate youth was an important duty. Two or three days thereafter Sir Brooke gave me a MS., entitled "Second Childhood; or, Exercises of a Neophyte in the New School." The said exercises were twofold, first a long poem, in heroic numbers, detailing minutely how the author in a morning ramble met with a juvenile chimney sweeper, who gazed wistfully upon a basket of

herrings, whereupon after a train of reflection and inquiries, Sir Brooke produced a penny, and presented three of the best silvercoats to the hungry youth. Secondly, a most laughable ode respecting childhood, which commenced :—

"Bring, oh bring the cap and bells,
Stuck with daffodil and daisy ;'

and of which I remember only four other lines, as follow :—

"Namby pamby, dally dilly!
Never let your thoughts aspire!
Wisdom lies in being silly ;
Man was made for nothing higher."

With these travesties, no one was more heartily diverted than the great poet himself, when he found them some years afterwards in an album at my house. I had, and ought *to have*, a large collection of Sir Brooke's MSS., but they have drifted out of my reach, and not through my own neglect, but that of unfaithful custodiars. Among them were two sonnets addressed to my unworthy self, one of which began :—

"Alas! good youth, my parts you over-rate ;
Old bosoms glow not with poetic fire ;
Untun'd, neglected hangs my silent lyre,
Petrarch's sad strains no more to modulate."

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But by way of contrast, and in order to prove how truly Sir Brooke deserves to be commemorated and honoured among our *very best* poets, I need only refer to the now rare volume already mentioned, namely, "Sorrows Sacred to his Daughter's Memory," printed by Bulmer, 1796, with engravings from designs by Fuseli and Flaxman. I shall quote only two of the sonnets, all of which are eminently beautiful, and excepting that they terminate in couplets are written in strict accordance with the Petrarchan model.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

'Tis midnight. All lies hushed in dread repose.
Troubled with dreams I leave my restless bed,
To seek the silent mansions of the dead,
Sad soothing scenes, congenial to my woes.
The moon her melancholy lustre throws
O'er the dim yews, that darkest shadows spread
Where Sorrow rests in peace her weary head,
And the still heart nor joy nor anguish knows.
— 'Twas but the wind that sigh'd among the leaves;—
No plaintive murmur issued from the tomb;
There with no pang the tranquil bosom heaves,
Nor hope, nor love, nor grief nor memory come.
Open, oh earth, thy hospitable breast;
Stretch thy cold arms; receive another guest!

A RELIQUE.

Bright crisped threads of pure translucent gold,
Ye who were wont with zephyr's breath to play,
O'er the warm cheek and ivory forehead stray,

Or clasp her neck in many an amorous fold,
Now motionless this little shrine must hold,
No more to wanton in the eye of day
Or to the breeze your changing hues display,
For ever still, inanimate and cold.
Poor, poor, last relic of an angel face,—
Sad, setting ray, no more thy orb is seen;
Oh, beauty's pattern, miracle of grace,
Must this be all, that tells what thou hast been?
Come then, cold crystal, on this bosom lie,
Till love, and grief, and fond remembrance, die!

I believe that in the whole range of English poetry, there could not be found a sonnet more affecting or more musical than this!

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When I reflect on literary meetings of those days, nothing strikes me more forcibly than the vast discrepancy betwixt *then* and *now*, as to the number of authors and of publications. Of individuals already distinguished, our list was very limited, and of hopeful aspirants we had not many. In a literary as well as commercial sense, therefore, the strength of John Ballantyne's publishing house depended on Scott alone. There were authors, it is true, but they did not muster strong, either in number or in the necessary talent for writing *ad captandum*. As to criticism, William Erskine was in himself a host, but he wrote nothing now but law-papers. Then there were Southey, Wil-

liam Stewart Rose, Henry Weber, an industrious but crazy German, patronized by Scott, Dr. Jamieson, author of the Dictionary, Robert Jameson, said to be powerful in Norwegian and Icelandic, Lord Woodhouselee, my late brother-in-law Mr. Arthur Clifford, and others.

In the summer of that year occurred an event far too remarkable to be omitted in memoirs like these; namely, the sudden death, almost simultaneous, of two most eminent public characters, namely Lord President Blair, and Lord Melville. The former, I believe, had no premonitory symptoms, or, if so, he concealed them from his friends. The latter had warnings, and was told by medical men that his life depended on caution and on abstinence from usual work, usual diet, and usual exercise, to which he replied that such prolongation of life would only be a mode of dying before his time; that he felt he *must* go on as long as strength permitted; in his own words, the "pitcher must find its way to the well till it broke," and though enjoined to remain inactive and motionless, he wrote letters as usual, and rode out on horseback to the last.

Among presidents of the Scottish law-courts, I imagine no one ever commanded such universal respect as Blair. It is impossible to suppose that Lavater's aphorism proved untrue in this case.

A man thus distinguished and blameless must have had enemies, but if so, they never ventured into daylight. No rancorous tongue ever spoke against him, because there was not the remotest chance that any such attack would have been successful. He was in truth a character *prononcé* and steadfast, like an old Roman Worthy of the best stamp. Rising gradually out of a sphere of poverty, from first to last his principle in life seemed to be that of shunning no degree of labour in his profession. He cared not in that respect how much difficulty he encountered. He was not a convivial character in the Edinburgh acceptation of the term. If I remember right, he used to retire to rest early, like Sir Brooke Boothby; and rose to breakfast betwixt four and five, and had half a day's hard work achieved, before his public duties in the Court commenced. And though given up wholly to his professional pursuits, it was said, and I believe truly, that in literature consisted his pre-eminent delight, and that the greatest of his enjoyments was when the session broke up, and being no longer in harness, he could throw himself into his arm-chair and read Gulliver's travels or the last new novel, which he did with the fresh feelings of boyhood. But his reading was various and extensive, for he was an admirable scholar, not only as a Grecian and Latinist, but in Italian

and French. In whatever walk of life he had chosen, he must have arrived at eminence; the only sort of toil that could have broken him down and dislocated his mind, I imagine, would have been that of a proletarian author forced to leap from subject to subject without working out any one. It was said that he was naturally sensitive and irritable in temperament; and that, consequently, the imperturbable patience and amenity which he showed on the bench, could not have been maintained without severe pressure on the nervous system, whence the farther inference is not improbable that the harangue, after two o'clock, of some prosy dozy advocate, may have led to that sudden attack of apoplexy which caused his almost instantaneous death.

In one of the many letters addressed to me about this time by Dr. John Gillies, I find the following passage:—"With regard to your valuable friend Mr. Scott, a curious thing was told to me by Mr. Hawkins Browne, when he was just leaving town. He had re-published lately his father's celebrated poem on the immortality of the soul, and sent some copies of it to Edinburgh. Mr. Browne told me that he was informed by your acquaintance Mr. Mackenzie, that Mr. Walter Scott and the late President Blair, employed great part of the Sunday in reading critically this poem.

President Blair died on the Monday morning. You may speak of this to Mr. Scott or Mr. Mackenzie, who will, perhaps, tell you more." (2d June 1811.)

The truth was merely (if I remember right), that President Blair had received and read over carefully, the new edition of Browne's works, observing to his friends that he found in it some remarkable coincidences of thought, with certain passages in his father's poem entitled, "The Grave." But the story of Scott having joined with him in this study on the very day before the President's death was apocryphal.

Of Lord Melville, as a public character, I need not write a single line. As the friend and confidant of William Pitt, he is sufficiently remembered. But to his worth in private life, accidental circumstances enable me to contribute my humble testimony. Lord Melville, indeed, afforded one among the excessively rare examples of a statesman, having passed the best of his days in the toils and intrigues of parliamentary life, without ever losing his original kindness of heart and *naïveté* of manners, or becoming tinged with avarice and selfish ambition. Like all good men, according to Lavater's aphorism, he was well provided with enemies, who grasped eagerly at an opportunity of traducing his character, and who

at last accused him of that very vice of avarice and mammon-worship, from which he was signally free. Assuming that the public money had been mismanaged during his official reign, I imagine he might, like Lord Clive on another occasion, have said, that he wondered on reflection how it happened that the defalcations had not been much more! Be this as it may, the motives of his accusers, judging by their own conduct, could not have been pre-eminently pure. In his retirement at Duneira, he was so much beloved and honoured that the pack of assailants ceased to bark, seeing that they could no longer bite. The best summing up of Lord Melville's character in private life, would be the mere truth, that those who knew him the most intimately and best, esteemed and respected him the most.

At this time I met Sir Walter Scott almost daily at Ballantyne's, or elsewhere. He invited me again and again to dinner, which (excepting once) I declined on the score of ill health; and he dined more than once *chez nous*, to meet Sir Brooke Boothby and other friends. This I mention only to show how kindly disposed he was towards any literary aspirant, however unmanageable and wayward such aspirant might be. In truth, his good-will was not easily to be alienated by eccentricities. I remember his complaining this

year that on his list of incipient poets, he had one so incurably shy that attention and encouragement were thrown away on him; he would not, properly speaking, accept of either. This was Mr. W. Howison, afterwards well known as "M. de Peu de Mots," a man of real genius, as I believe, but whose excessive fastidiousness prevented him from ever attaining that literary rank to which his talents would otherwise have been entitled. In 1811, Scott was not only employed in writing the poem of Don Roderick, but on divers other tasks, to all of which he buckled with the utmost zeal and cheerfulness. As I have elsewhere remarked, he seemed even to enjoy the difficulties of his position: he could look them in the face and laugh them to scorn. I was often at his house, and was always kindly received, because I came with this or that old book, which I thought might be acceptable, and because I never staid long. To say little and retire quickly, was what he most desiderated in a chance visitor. But he had then begun to cherish the plan of early rising, which he afterwards kept up systematically, and which enabled him to complete his long compositions unobserved: so that in after years an entire Waverley Novel was finished in a time incredibly short; and the Ettrick Shepherd averred: "He was vera sure that Walter Scott could write a three volume

novel within, at the outside, ten days." Jesting apart, I believe that with the help of a sufficiently clever amanuensis, the realization of Hogg's assertion would have been by no means impossible. To his present favourite Wallace, (a wiry-haired terrier), he gave the credit of introducing this early system, inasmuch as the said Wallace was of a restless temper, and loved to see his master up and at work, taking his place very regularly on a chair beside him, with a piece of paper clenched in his mouth.

During the summer session of 1811, I had to prepare for the vastly important solemnity of an examination before the dean of faculty and his associates, on the profound doctrines of the "Corpus juris," a work for which usually the examiners cared quite as little as their examinees, and respecting which they themselves would have by no means relished cross-questioning. Up to the present hour, I can scarcely imagine how any one in so wretched a state of health as I then was, could submit to this ordeal. However, I had by that time made up my mind to the notion of a duality of lives, first, a life of conventionalism in servile compliance with the world and its ways; second, a life of liberty, or inward life, admitting of no other outward world, but that of books and rural scenery and imaginary

beings. The disagreeable exactions of the former, I thought, might be endured for no better purpose than that of returning to the latter with more zest.

It was the custom then, that every one preparing for the bar, should abridge his own labours by a short course of lessons with a most worthy man named James Hogg, whose character was so remarkable, that I have, before now, made him the subject of a separate essay. In early youth he distinguished himself at school as a latin scholar, and at college as a mathematician. Sir Walter Scott recounted, with great good humour, that at college he was once soundly beaten by this man for having taken the liberty of affixing to the collar of his coat, a slip of paper, with the words, "the learned pig casts accounts." I have said that this James (a great contrast with his namesake the Shepherd) was a remarkable character, because I do not think that, in all my life, before or since, I ever met with a similar instance of imperturbable patience and contentment. Except by his lessons, the profits of which perhaps averaged 50*l.* or 60*l.* per annum, no one could tell how he lived. He had no associates; no one ever crossed the threshold of his private domicile in Alison's-square, a quarter of Edinburgh corresponding somewhat to the *marais* at Paris. But on all days of the year,

in all weathers, the tall gaunt form of James Hogg, with the same placid smile on his features, might be met stalking along the streets of Edinburgh. And like the majority of ghosts, he invariably appeared in the same costume, therefore was unmistakable.

During many years that I knew him he wore the same brown *surtout*, thread-bare from the first, and carried the same weather-beaten umbrella. Their endurance and impassivity must have been akin to his own. I suspect there was somewhat of the supernatural, as there certainly was of inexplicable in this man, more especially as without exhibiting any symptom of illness or increasing age, he ceased to appear, and no one could tell what became of him at last. I shall only add that his patience was well-tried *chez moi*, and that at every reading I declared that to endure another would be impossible. But he always returned at the appointed hour, and his meek obduracy of purpose was invulnerable.

I have said that this year was memorable in my life on account of a trifling incident which affected my fates and fortunes ever afterwards. The occurrence may be stated in few words. One fine morning a near relative, in whose judgment I placed great confidence, addressed me in the following words: "Money is wanted. You are

the only one now amongst us who has solid property to lean upon. The question is, will you now join in a security for a few thousands, of which, 500*l*., if you require it, may be at your own command?" The question seemed to me not to admit of doubt; it was decided in one instant. Not being in the least given to any speculation farther than that of purchasing old books and very questionable old pictures, I rather wondered, it is true, why so much hard cash was needed; but my assent was given instantly, after which no prudential arguments would induce me to withdraw it. Every possible effort for this purpose was made by a much nearer relation, who pleaded that although I had never signed any bond, or burdened the land with any debt, yet unluckily it was already burdened. I had in fact succeeded to an embarrassed property, and if this new debt were superadded to the former, it would become next to impossible to borrow for my own purposes if I should ever have need to do so.

Every such plea was parried by a home-thrust put in by a most amiable and kind-hearted lady. "If relations won't help one another," said she, "who's to help them?" So Messrs. Gibson, Christie, and Wardlaw, received the requisite instructions on my part, the bonds were drawn,

and next autumn I had the pleasure of a visit from a writer to his majesty's signet, agent for the lenders, who was kind enough to take possession of my lands in their behalf; a mere formality, as he observed, on which I then scarcely bestowed a second thought.

The ground seemed as firm beneath my feet after the legal functionary went as before he came, but this firmness did not continue long. In 1815, the money was gone, the speculation had failed; there was a sort of panic in the commercial world, and the lenders of course did most rigorously demand back their *argent comptant.* For their claim alone my poor acres were sold and sacrificed. No other claim was made or menaced, and the sacrifice therefore appeared to me both cruel and absurd. In equity and in truth, I was bound for only a third part of the sum; but alas! this plea availed me nothing. The aforesaid writer to the signet had done his duty; the *entire* amount was charged on my property, the charge was publicly enregistered, consequently I was under the necessity to find an immediate customer for the whole security, or allow the tender mercy of the law to take its course. My joint cautioners had no lands to sacrifice; the payments made by them did not take place before, but *after* the irrevocable break-up and downfall of my patrimonial roof-tree; and no

sooner had I been dispossessed, than consolation was addressed to me in the shape of a long argumentative letter, showing how very beneficial and lucrative would be the investment of 10,000*l.* out of my reversion money, in order to assist in another promising speculation upon a larger scale.

CHAPTER IV.

A FARTHER PLEA IN FAVOUR OF EGOTISM.—LETTERS FROM THE LATE JOHN GILLIES, LL.D., F.R.S.

To such readers as look for amusement only, the last three pages will no doubt appear *àpropos de bottes;* but I have sometimes ventured to entertain a notion that these memoirs, hastily penned as they are, might now and then convey an instructive moral. The inferences to be drawn from the trifling event just now recorded, are, perhaps, too obvious to need mentioning. At all events there are two maxims thence arising, which may pass for self-evident propositions, but are not, on that account, the less valuable in practice. First, if a proprietor really wishes to retain hereditary acres, let him frankly avow his resolution to that effect, and, in support of it, let him refuse inflexibly to sully his title with the plague-spot of a "wadset," in plainer terms an "infeftment" in favour of a mortgagee. Secondly, if he despises this caution, and will burden his acres, in order

to support the plans of kind and confidential friends, let him not for one day relax in his needful exertions to provide against the possible failure of those plans; nor, for one moment, believe that in his own hour of need, those friends will, in their turn, manifest a like sympathy for his undertakings, or encounter any serious risk to promote them. This was not among admitted premisses on their part, and to expect it would therefore be most unreasonable.

I believe the remainder of this year may be dismissed in very few words, unless I should introduce a few extracts from literary correspondence, as proving how vastly busy and occupied I was after my own wayward fashion. By degrees I had become more and more impressed with the notion that "the world" ought to be banished, and that by solitary stedfast perseverance, it might be possible to strike on some entirely new vein of the literary mine, which would supply ample occupation for the remainder of life. In this notion I happened, for once, to be perfectly in the right. I did go on, labouring in vain for seven or eight years longer, till, all of a sudden, I struck upon certain neglected mines of German literature (mines neglected or misunderstood up to the present hour, numberless as are the recent translations from that language). *Then* it might

almost be said that whatever I touched turned into gold, and unexpected praise came from numberless quarters; but scarcely had I placed myself firmly in harness, when misfortunes accumulated; I was violently driven out of my proper course, and the reassumption of it now is very thoroughly impossible.

On looking over old letters, it seems strange to see how much time I bestowed, in 1811, on compositions, few of which were ever printed, and which, without exception, are entirely lost. Among numberless plans commenced and abandoned, was the very modest undertaking of a narrative poem on the romantic life and fortunes of King Robert Bruce, of which two cantos were perpetrated. As a guide thereto, I had, of course, Barbour's "Metrical Chronicle," in three vols., carefully edited by my laborious and indefatigable friend Dr. Jamieson. Farther, I had Kerr's prose history of Bruce's reign, then newly published; and I corresponded pleasantly with the Rev. J. Nicoll, minister of Inverleithen, who had for years past been occupied with a grand heroic poem on the same subject which I fear proved as ineffective as my own, for I never heard of its publication.

Considering that since the death of my uncle, Dr. John Gillies, no memoirs of his life and

writings have appeared, I think it may be allowed me to transcribe some little portion from many letters which I received from him about this time. I shall subjoin only two of them, which, according to my humble notions, deserve preservation, and are favourable specimens of his literary correspondence.

"London, 26th Oct. 1811.

"With my usual sincerity, I tell you that your poetry is fully as pleasing to me as any of the passages you transcribe from admired contemporaries. I like much in particular your sonnet to Autumn, Oct. 14th; and your introduction to the second Canto of the Bruce. Other critics may think differently, for as the epigram says :—

ουδεν εν ανθρωποισι διακριδον εστι νοημα,
αλλ' ὁ συ θαυμαζεις, τουτ' ἑτεροισι γελως.

"In matters of literature, especially poetry, the highest and noblest literature, and in which the greatest polish and perfection are required, it is best to allow our productions to grow up insensibly under our hands, and not to destroy anything that is marked by briskness of invention, or acuteness of thought, however inadequately it may be expressed, or inharmoniously it may sound. Where at bottom there is just feeling, or natural, but not obvious reflection, attempts apparently the most unpromising, may become

in the end the most successful; when, through the influence of a happier mood and brighter sunshine, they shall be exhibited in more glowing words, and greater brilliancy of numbers. I entreat therefore, that you would not, like Plato, destroy your verses, from which I augur everything that is pleasing and honourable.

"I must have been much wanting in perspicuity in my preceding letters, if anything there said seemed to imply a disapprobation of varying our literary employments. On this subject, I say with D'Alembert of whom you speak,—'Happy the mind which poetry does not soften and relax, which geometry does not harden into dryness.' I knew a good deal of him at Paris, and think you estimate him rightly. His reputation rests chiefly on the preface to the *Encyclopedie* and the geometrical articles in that work, and was not lower than it deserved to be through his party spirit, his intrigues, and his pretended persecutions. The late Lord Orford in his works scarcely says anything too harsh of him. Through coincidence in scepticism, the *bonhomie* of Hume was prepared for being completely deceived by him.—Mr. Alison, on Taste, has not yet fallen in my way; when it does, I shall, from what you say, be very glad to read it; though being founded entirely on the principle

of association which he carries, if I am rightly informed, to the same length with Hartley on Man, his account of the subject must be imperfect. Aristotle's poetry and rhetoric, with Longinus, are my favourite critics. I have read them twenty times over at least. A translation of the Rhetoric was sent to me a few days ago by the publisher to look at. It is by a Mr. Crimmin, and merits to be placed on the same shelf with Taylor's Metaphysics. In speaking of criticism, my wife read to me that on Don Roderic. The review had been left with her by John Tytler. We perfectly agree with you in reprobation of that venomous burst of envy. Authors who, unrestrained by any worthy principle, write merely for effect, should have shown more adroitness in concealing their malignity. But Menander says,—

ουκ εστ' ανοιας ουδεν, ὡς εμοι δοκει, τολμηροτατον.

"They put me in mind of a passage I have just been reading in Landino's annotations on Dante, in which, speaking of some contemporary critics, he prays, 'che Dio a loro augmenta la prudenza e scemi l'arroganza.' Mr. Copplestone, in his reply to their calumnies against Oxford, has victoriously and unanswerably exposed them. I adhere to what was said in a former letter about works of fiction. Other things being the

same, they are infinitely less impressive than real history. Truth only is calculated to affect us very deeply. Even Shakspeare's historical plays have, under this view, pleased me the most; and Homer for the same reason, interests me far more than Virgil. Is there not something like this said in Trotter's Memoirs of Mr. Fox? I have only seen extracts from that work in newspapers; which extracts about Homer, Aristotle, &c., very much coincide with my notions of poets and of poetry.

"The love for rural beauty cannot be too much encouraged, nor can we too fondly cherish many of the emotions and affections belonging to our early years, when, as Thomson says, 'Nature all is blooming and benevolent.' I would go along with the most sentimental writers on this subject, if the end which they aim at were attainable. But the order of Nature forbids it. We are so constituted that all our passive impressions are weakened by repetition; whereas, by the same repetition, that is, by exercise, all our active habits are invigorated. This brings me to a momentous subject in your letter, independently of which, all other subjects are not of any, the least value: *ποθεν το κακον*; to which question the ancient Gnomic poet answers most pertinently and completely,

ουκ αν γενοιτο χωρις τα αγαθα και κακα,
αλλ' εστι τις συγκρατις ὡς παντα εχειν καλως,

'good and evil could not exist separately; there is a fit mixture of them that all may go well.' Indeed all things exist from contraries, and good and evil bearing to each other the relation of contrariety, infer essentially the mutual existence of each other, as much as do other relations, son, father; high, low; before, after, &c. The poet's answer, therefore, perfectly agrees with the notions suggested to us by the established course of Nature. But our fancy has created under the government of the Almighty, a course of things totally different from that which we experience. Under this impression, you ask why pain, death, above all, that infinitely stupendous and interesting event, the death of Christ?—why so much wickedness, and so much wretchedness in the world? All these questions resolve themselves into one, why is not the government of God more perfect? in other words, why were we not made at once the same amiable and excellent creatures, that, according to the supposition, we were intended to be? I answer that the thing is impossible, if what we are to be is essentially dependent on what we are to do. That it is thus dependent, the established course of Nature evinces. Children must be disciplined into men,

through a long train of resolves and actions, before they can acquire even by much dear-bought experience, even that degree of prudence, self-denial, and the other virtues, without which, it would be impossible to subsist in civil society. Men, in like manner, have much to do, and much to suffer before they attain those practical habits of piety and virtue that will enable them, in opposition to selfish passions or particular affections uniformly to comply with the will of God, not only as their duty, but as their consummate happiness. 'Resolve and practise the best things,' says the Greek proverb, 'and practice will render them the most pleasant.' It is practice only that can do so. To see what a speculative moralist is, view Dr. Johnson as delineated by yourself. With many respectable qualities, how much more respectable he would have been, with only an ordinary measure of charity and candour, with a tolerable degree of self-command, and a less frequent indulgence in envy and malignity? Indeed I should think that to talk finely of virtue, and to present glowing images of it to the mind, unless this be accompanied with virtuous resolutions, often carried into effect, has an infallible tendency to impair our virtuous energies, by creating a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. I agree to what you

say of the love of fame, as the words are explained by you. But the love of fame, as usually understood, appears to me an uneasy, bustling, fidgetty passion, altogether unworthy of a wise man."

"London, 28th Sept. 1811.

"Various causes, that will occur to you, and Mr. Barrow's absence from town, made me delay answering your most acceptable letter of the 5th August, with the poetical part of which I was particularly well pleased, though not in the fittest mood for relishing the playful fictions of poetry. I have also read with pleasure your verses in the Edinburgh Annual Register. For the sake of self-complacency, every writer should have recourse to the press: how much better do his compositions read when exhibited through that medium! You have got a fine subject in the Bruce, from which you will not, I hope, allow yourself to be diverted by less worthy undertakings. * * * * A labour like that you are engaged in must grow up insensibly. It cannot be performed with the regularity and rapidity of a task. A man should sit down to write only when being happy in himself, he is likely by his effusions to communicate happiness to his friend.

All of us are liable to ebbs and flows, especially the most delicate minds. Your hypochondriasm, I am convinced, proceeds from delicacy and sensibility—ordinary companions in youth—and which firmer years, without dissipating anything of the rich ore, will blunt and harden. But the operation of time must be seconded by early rising and exercise. A day should not escape, at this season of the year particularly, without laying in a stock of health to encounter the severities of winter. A fit relish for the beauties of Nature and of poetry, is held the best corrective for that extreme sensibility to the events of life, and that overwhelming sympathy, not unfrequently the bane of the worthiest characters. To this observation I am led by repeated references in your letters to Professor Stewart's reflections on the culture of certain intellectual habits. David Hume has somewhere said in his Essays, that a little miss drest in a new gown for a dancing school ball, receives as complete enjoyment as the greatest orator, who triumphs in the power of his eloquence over the resolutions of numerous assemblies. Edmund Burke, as quoted by Professor Stewart, p. 315, says, the pleasures of imagination are much higher than any derived from the rectitude of the judgment. 'In the morning of our days, when the senses are unworn and tender,

when the whole man is awake in every part, how lively at that time are our sensations, and how false and inaccurate the judgments we form of things! I despair of ever receiving the same degree of pleasure from the most excellent performances of genius, which I felt at that time from pieces which my present judgment regards as trifling and contemptible.' Professor Stewart answers this at some length, and, as concurring with his answer, cites, by way of confirmation, a very sensible passage from M. D'Alembert's reflections on poetry. By Hume and Burke, however, no such answers will be held philosophical and conclusive, because the advocates on both sides of the question regard pleasure as an effect produced by external agency; a thing merely felt; a passive sensation independent of action and energy. But the case is quite otherwise, for pleasure is identified with action; our pleasures, I say, are more essentially united with our actions than even the desires producing them, because these desires are separable in time, but the pleasures are simultaneous, rising above each other in worth according to the nature of those energies which they accompany, invigorate, and perfect. In comparing therefore the value of pleasures, we must compute that of the powers and energies from which they spring, and from which the

pleasures are inseparable in time, or even in thought. From this view of the subject, the question will be easily settled betwixt Mr. Hume's young miss and his orator; betwixt Burke's childish admiration for a wild Irish bard, and his discerning admiration of Virgil, or rather of Homer, 'qui nil molitur inepte.'

"From your repeated commendations of Professor Stewart's 'Intellectual Habits,' I have read over that treatise with all the attention due to the reflections of so able a man. It is to be wished that a little more time had been bestowed on moulding the matter; that his language had been more clear and concise, and his observations more particular and more definite. In warmly recommending the culture of the imagination, he observes that, 'by means of our numerous books of fiction, education has a greater power and purchase over this faculty than over any other. The tale of fiction will be soon laid aside with the toys and rattles of infancy; but the habits created by it, and the powers which it has brought into activity will be permanent and valuable treasures to the possessor. He will be accustomed to dwell on the past, the distant, and the future; and according to Dr. Johnson's observation, the man will thereby be exalted in the scale of intellectual being.' All this sounds very well, but I am in

some doubt as to its solidity, for real events should seem better calculated to excite interest than those that are fictitious. They equally withdraw our attention from the present, and fix it on the past, the distant, and, through associations and anticipations unavoidable, also on the future. To produce these effects indeed, they must be related agreeably, and placed as it were before the eyes by animated imagery. Hume's History, and Plutarch's Lives, I will add Johnson's Lives of the Poets, would not form indeed the pleasantest of romances; but as they consist of realities, they are perhaps more pleasing than any mere romances whatever. Homer and Ariosto I consider not in that light; they are descriptions, the one of heroic, the other of chivalrous characters and manners, which respectively long prevailed in celebrated parts of the world. Fictions, some will say, may be more marvellous—grant it. Does that prove their superiority? They may be more various—that I deny. The combinations of the most fertile fancy will never comprehend the wide variety of impressions in the rich storehouse of Nature. Still, however, they are better adapted to please and to excite curiosity; they have more of novelty as well as wonder. But are such insatiate appetites which grow from what they feed on, to be indulged? Are things only fit for

seasonings on holydays to be substituted for necessary daily food? To recommend the culture of the fancy by such means is unwise in the present state of society, when the public taste is corrupted by wild fantastic effusions, by compositions that have nothing to allure but strangeness of adventure and incident, complication of disasters, and eccentricity of characters. In this reading age, how few are there who do not read chiefly for the purpose of coming at events of no other value, but as they exercise an idle and endless curiosity, busied whole days long in turning over books which will leave them at the conclusion in a state of yawning torpor, without one topic for useful meditation, or a single fact worthy to be remembered.

"From the 'Intellectual Habits' I turned back to Mr. Stewart's discussion on the beautiful and sublime, and on taste, with which I could not be but particularly well-pleased, as far as the mode of investigation is concerned, which is entirely Aristotelian, though Mr. Stewart appears not to be aware of it. This I presume to say, because in assigning the different meanings of the words, beauty and sublimity, he adopts as a happy philological discovery Mr. R. Knight's notion, that words without any kind of metaphor, are applied *transitively* from one thing to another. The merit

of the discovery itself indeed, he ascribes to M. D'Alembert, who bestows on words what he calls a 'meaning by extension.' But Mr. Stewart thinks very justly that Mr. Knight's way of expressing this truth is by much the happier. Now the truth is a very old one, and there is also a very old way of expressing it. 'Things are *homonymous* which are denoted by the same words taken in different meanings.' This is the first sentence of the Organon; and the distinction betwixt things homonymous and synonymous is material in all correct reasoning. You will perceive that I mean synonymous in the Greek, not synonymes in the French sense, which *synonymes* had no place in logic, but which in connection with figurative language were discussed by Aristotle in a chapter of his Art of Poetry, now lost, as we learn from Simplicius.

"With regard to Mr. Stewart's disquisitions, I think it deserves to be remarked how kindly complaisant he is to Voltaire, and other French writers, over whom in the solidity and dignity of his principles, he holds so distinguished a pre-eminence. It is to degrade the perceptions of either natural or moral beauty, to assimilate them through the nickname of taste, to coarse organic impressions on the palate. Such language was unknown to the purer ages of intellectual philo-

sophy, and should seem to be more worthy of French cooks, than of Italian and French men of letters, through whom it has been transmitted to present times from the later Platonicians, the inventors of all sorts of follies. Even the 'sublime' in contradistinction to the 'beautiful,' may be traced to the same fantastic source. Aristotle and Dionysius disavow all such useless distinctions, even in works of the most discriminating and refined criticism; and Longinus, himself a Platonician, who did not indeed first introduce, but who adopted the word in the meaning now given to it, had too much natural good sense to adhere in his treatise on the 'sublime' to the idea first assigned by him; for he treats of sublimity in writing, as what is most perfect in every species of beauty, whether of the grand and terrible, or only of the graceful and pleasing kind. But this by the way. What it imports more to observe is, that if animals devoid of reason be incapable of any notions of the 'beautiful' and 'sublime,' all such notions must be of a compound nature, combining with organic sensibility simultaneous operations of intellect. The same holds in matters of taste and criticism that takes place in practical morality. The foundation of both is what Milton calls 'a wise and well-ordered appetite.' Our sensations, as well as our sentiments, are to be

disciplined by custom and early instruction, until they are gradually moulded into that critical tact, that scientific sense, which will decide quickly and surely concerning the beauties of art and nature. It is thus that practice makes perfect in things by which life is embellished, as well as in those by which it is upheld. But the intellectual processes by which this is effected must be sought for in the wisdom of the species, not of the individual; they must be collected from those models stamped with excellence, the admiration of ages and nations. When deeply impressed with such patterns of perfection, it is by meditating, analysing, and improving them, that we shall extract rules and principles far better than any which the most patient and penetrating mind is likely to elicit from its own experiments and speculations.

"You mention your friend Mr. Black's Life of Tasso, which, I am sorry to say, has not yet fallen in my way. Indeed I have not of late made any new acquaintances among books; but, when I have an opportunity, I shall eagerly read the Life of Tasso, which should not be written but by a man of literary enthusiasm, such as you describe Mr. Black. What you say of coincidences in books, I am well aware of. When short, prudence will suggest an alteration, because that which is true is not always probable. When long,

they will commonly be imperfect, leaving a good deal original to each author.

"According to the notion generally entertained of James VI., his private life should not seem very deserving of commemoration. But there is little doubt that his faults were greatly exaggerated, and that he has often been scandalously calumniated. * * * *

"Farewell, my dear R., and remember me most kindly to your mother, and to relations at Brechin, when you see them. My wife joins in kindest remembrances. I am always affectionately yours,

"J. G."

CHAPTER V.

THE AUTHOR'S SUCCESS AS A POET.—LETTERS FROM SIR WALTER SCOTT.—MY RETURN TO EDINBURGH, AND ASSUMPTION OF THE ADVOCATE'S GOWN.—LADY GRANGE'S LETTERS FROM ST. KILDA. —CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR EGERTON BRYDGES.

INSTEAD of regarding my title to hereditary acres as weakened by the bonds which had been signed, I proceeded in firm confidence of stability, to make divers improvements on the old house, also continued my planting and pruning operations through the next winter, being allowed to spend the whole of it in the country. In the beginning of May, 1812, I wrote, in two mornings, the first canto of "Childe Alarique," a production which, strange to say, went afterwards through two editions; was twice reprinted in America, and although anonymous, obtained some notoriety for the author. I can only account for this by the exertions of kind influence which Sir Egerton Brydges made in my behalf, and by the already-mentioned paucity of literary aspirants at that period. The ground-plan of the poem was in-

telligible enough. It was merely an amplification in verse of a letter published by Sir Egerton Brydges in the "Ruminator," consisting of invectives against "the world," and a recommendation of solitude. In point of executive power, "Childe Alarique," according to my present recollections (the book being unattainable), was wofully and ridiculously defective.

Out of many letters with which I was honoured by Sir Walter Scott, some few remain to me, among which two or three are dated this year. They are hastily written, and are not long, but, nevertheless, will afford very sufficient evidence to bear out my previous assertions, how willingly and kindly he encouraged the literary attempts of aspirants, however whimsical and unmanageable they might be.

"Ashestiel, 26th April, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—Upon receiving your letter, the date of which ought to make me ashamed, I applied to John Ballantyne for the account of Carey's poems, but found it was set up for the Register. I dare say I shall find some other scrap for the 'Bibliographer,' although I shall hardly venture to enter into a personal correspondence with Sir S. E. Brydges, because I am certain, from a consciousness of my own infirmity in such

cases, that I should let it drop awkwardly; in which case, you know, it is better not commenced. Few people are worse at sustaining a literary correspondence than I am, for which I have only the apology which the Neapolitan lazarone pleaded when asked why he did not work instead of begging. 'Did you but know,' said he, in a most piteous tone of voice, 'how lazy I am!'

"This same vice of laziness has made your letter lie too long in my desk unanswered, and perhaps you will think I had better let it so remain than take the privilege of an older man to give you a gentle scolding for some expressions in your last. In truth, it gives me great pain to think that a young gentleman at your time of life, with such favourable prospects, and a disposition so amiable, should give way to that state of depression which your letter announces. Believe me, it is not right to do so, and it is very possible to avoid it. The fiend which haunts you, if resisted, will flee from you. Plunge into active study, diversified by agreeable company, and regular exercise; ride, walk, dance or shoot, or hunt, or break stones on the highway rather than despond about your health, which is the surest way in the world to bring about the catastrophe which you are apprehensive of. An untaught philosopher, my neighbour in this place, had the misfortune to lose

an only son, at an age when the parent's heart is chiefly wrapt up in his offspring. He used always to be of my fishing parties, but within a day or two after the funeral, I was surprised at his joining me with his spear in his hand. 'I see you are surprised,' he said, with the tears in his eyes, 'and undoubtedly I have sustained the severest wound which fate could have inflicted; but were I to sit down to muse over it, my heart would break, or I should go mad, and I judge it more like a man who has duties left to perform, to resume my active occupations of business and of pastime.' Go you, my dear sir, and do likewise. If you would not laugh at me, I should recommend you to fall heartily in love with the best and prettiest girl in your neighbourhood. The committing the power of teasing us to another, is very apt to prevent us from exercising that irritability of feeling on ourselves.

"I don't apologise for these observations because I am sure you will ascribe them to a sincere interest in your welfare. I trust your law-studies will bring you soon to town, when I shall have the pleasure to see you. Meanwhile, believe me, yours very faithfully,

"W. S."

"Edinburgh, 12th May, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—I am greatly to blame for not sooner acknowledging the receipt of your letter with the verses, which I think very pretty; indeed, I have little doubt that by giving your mind occasionally to literary and poetical composition, you will alleviate, and in time conquer the nervous feelings which you entertain, and which are really to be conquered by exertion, and by exertion alone. My present situation is a very hurried one, as I am on the point of leaving Ashestiel, long my summer cabin, and occupying a very small tenement upon my late purchase of Abbotsford, until leisure, which the learned define as implying time and money, will permit me to begin a more convenient one. Meanwhile, the change, though not much more important than from the brown room to the green, as was the Vicar of Wakefield's great revolution, fails not to require some superintendence and to make a great deal of bustle. So this must be my excuse for not writing to Sir Egerton Brydges at present, with whose domestic calamity I sincerely sympathise. I have the clamour of about twenty people, with twenty different demands, all of the most trifling nature, still stunning my ears; and I begin to think that what the Scotch call a *flitting* may be so effectual a mode for giving scope for your exertion, and

exercise for your patience as any of the prescriptions I formerly took the freedom to send you. I return to all this confusion in the course of this week or the next, when I hope to end it.

"I should have liked to have said more about your verses, which I really think very elegant. I am sorry the conclusion has a melancholy turn, and I must beg you, my dear young friend, for the sake of all that is dear to you, to recollect that active exertion is peremptorily imposed upon us as a law of our nature; and as the price of that degree of happiness, which our present state of existence admits of. You see the rich and the proud reduced to purchase contentment, and their night's rest by the hardest bodily labour. Those to whom nature has kindly indulged the power of literary labour, occupying the higher, instead of their mere corporeal functions, ought not surely to be less active in their pursuits than mere fishers or fox-hunters. Crabbe says somewhere, 'As labour lets, we live.' It is really the charter by which we hold existence, and be it in picking straws, or legislating for empires, we must labour or die of *ennui*. I hope, therefore, to hear that you are forming some literary plan, with the determination of carrying it through, and depend upon it, you will learn to defy the foul fiend. I have got a present of a handsome little copy of

Douce's unique romance of Vergilius. Do you know who edited it? Yours ever,

"W. S.

"I have managed this so awkwardly that it will cost you double postage, M.P.s being now scarce here. What do you think of trying your hand on a dilettante edition of something that is rare and curious?"

The following note would seem too trifling for transcription, were it not that it serves also to corroborate some of my previous records, and shows that Sir Walter would not write to postpone a convivial meeting, without adding some kind words of advice and encouragement.

"Edinburgh, Monday (1813).

"My dear Sir,—I am very sorry it will not be in my power to wait upon you again at Kale-time, till I return from Abbotsford, my time being already occupied by far too much of engagements abroad, and too much to do at home. When I return, I shall be happy to meet Sir Brooke in Heriot Row.

"Pray don't talk of yourself in the way you do. Your health, it is true, is not such as I sincerely wish it to be, but then you have many means of alleviating the tedium of indisposition,

both by your pleasure in perusing the works of others, and your own

'Skill to soothe the lagging hour,
With no inglorious song.'

You must not, therefore, allow yourself to be depressed by your complaints, but seek amusement in those harmless and elegant pursuits, which will best divert your mind from dwelling upon them. I am sensible that it is more easy to recommend than to practise that command of spirit which abstracts us from the immediate source of pain or languor. But it is no less necessary that this exertion should be made, and really in this world the lots of men are so variously assigned to them, that each may find in his own case, circumstances of pleasure as well as points of pain unknown to others.

"Excuse the freedom I use, and believe me, with every kind wish, very much yours,

"W. S.

"Many thanks for the novels. I will take care of them, and safely return them."

In May, 1812, I returned to Edinburgh in order to assume the gown and wig of an advocate, and pay 360*l.* (such I believe is the sum) for that honour; an honour which I prized for

no other reason than because it gave me access to an enormous store of books. My time, during the weeks spent in town, was principally given to selecting rare volumes out of a large stock then in the hands of Mr. Blackwood. My lodgings happened to form a convenient resting-place for Sir Walter, during his daily walks home from the Parliament House, and he came divers times to look over my acquisitions. At one of these meetings I complained angrily of Blackwood, for having refused an offer that I made for an old portfolio, containing original letters of Lady Grange, from the Island of St. Kilda, written on whity-brown paper, with soot and milk, instead of ink, and in a style of orthography and penmanship such as has rarely been equalled. Taking up a fox-brush, which I used as a duster, he waved it in mock solemnity of admonition: "Don't be so very wrathful," said he; "Blackwood only wants to turn Rachael Chieslie to the best pecuniary account, and he is in treaty for the letters with Mr. Erskine of Mar, who, as a relation of Lord Grange, will give five times as much in order to suppress them, as we could offer with a view to publication."—"But they ought not to be locked up by Mr. Erskine; they deserve to be published."—"And so do away for ever with the romantic character which has hitherto attached to

this amiable and accomplished lady? But, for your comfort, know and perpend, that, unnoticed and unsuspected, I one morning took notes of all that seemed most curious in the letters, and so would be in condition to bolster up a full and true account of Lady Grange's captivity, without needing to trouble Blackwood, or the laird of Mar."

Before leaving town, I engaged for my future residence, a house which had formerly belonged to Lord Buchan, situated at the corner of South Castle-street, right under the Castle rock. I then returned to the country, cherishing a multitude of plans, the only vestiges of which now remaining are some eccentric papers already mentioned, published in the "Ruminator," by Sir Egerton Brydges, the work, as Lord Byron observed, "of a very able old man, and a half-wild young one" (Journal, Nov. 23, 1813). The first of the numberless long and kind letters which I had the honour to receive from Sir Egerton bears date, "Lee Priory, Jan. 6th, 1812." By including in my records a portion of those characteristic and interesting letters, I know too well that I may incur a charge of vanity,—a charge which, however, may in some degree be rebutted by the tone in which I have uniformly spoken of my own fragmentary productions. But farther, it may be alleged that, in justice to the memory of a revered

friend, I ought to have suppressed letters which do so much less honour to his critical judgment than to his good-nature. I take the liberty of thinking otherwise, however. To discover merits where others cannot descry aught but faults or weakness, is often not merely a proof of a generous disposition, but of the *vivida vis animi*, somewhat akin to that of the musical composer, whose attention may be caught by a few faint notes, broken and uneven, his own genius lending thereto an importance which the said notes otherwise could not possibly have claimed. Such genius, and such good nature, are of rare occurrence in this world, where, on the contrary, the character of a snarling, captious, disdainful censor may be found every day, and I suspect is most frequently met with in very disreputable circles.

The ten following letters are from Sir Egerton Brydges.

"Lee Priory, near Wingham, Kent.
Jan. 6. 1812.

"Sir,—Your letter, which arrived this morning in a parcel of books from London, is so very highly gratifying to me (though I am conscious of having small pretensions to the notice you are so good as to bestow on me), that, though much hurried, I cannot suffer a post to elapse without

my acknowledgments. I cannot tell you the kind of glow which such praise impels through my whole frame. I should be almost ashamed to clothe in words what future literary efforts on my part it has a tendency to cherish. All the poetry of the beautiful sonnet you send me (except the part relating to myself) is of the purest and best kind. That union of moral feelings with the simplest images of nature, is of the very essence of the Muses' attractions. The fountain of all poetry is the most vivid sensibility. It frequently amounts to disease, because everything, when at its highest, has an occasional tendency to excess: but by its moments of happy delirium it amply repays for all its evils. It is want of encouragement which nips in the bud the greater portion of what genius would otherwise produce; though it argues want of due fortitude of mind to be thus discouraged; for I feel confident that the delineation of genuine feeling, however excessive, can never incur ridicule, but will secure sympathy among the few who are highly gifted. The noblest field is still open to a young man like you, who looks abroad upon nature, and seizes all those natural associations of ideas which form the involuntary dreams of poets, and are so admirably described in the 'Edinburgh Review,' for August, in the critique on 'Alison on Taste.'

"For my part, I have only to regret a life thrown away in unsettled pursuits, and time lost which it is now too late to recover. I have now closed my forty-ninth year, and the remnant of my days is, at best, very uncertain, and probably very short. I do not less prize the fame of genius, and the delights of leaving behind some literary relics which, having been steeped in the true waters, may still live with posterity, because I now see the gratification of such an ambition beyond my own reach. But my life has been distracted with cares, which have never allowed me an uninterrupted indulgence of my natural pursuits; and I have been obliged to throw out by snatches some hasty and imperfect scrap, rather than sink into absolute and unbroken obscurity and idleness. A very large family, an embarrassed property, and a variety of other claims upon my time and spirits, have disturbed and dissipated the concentration of such little powers as Nature gave me. Even when I had written thus far, the intrusion of a visitor has prevented my filling up this paper as I had intended; and driven me nearly to the last moment of this post, which I cannot suffer to be lost without a seeming neglect to you, of which I would on no account be guilty.

"Permit me, therefore, to thank you for your

accompanying article of 'Bellenden,' which is very acceptable, and which I shall return to the printer by this night's mail, with a proof, which I have yet to correct, and to express how very much gratified I shall be by the honour and pleasure of your future correspondence, when I trust I shall be at more leisure to write at a length more merited by the flattering contents of yours.

"Your obliged, and grateful humble servant,

"SAMUEL EGERTON BRYDGES.

"P.S. I amused myself about a week ago, with a project of a new periodical paper of Moral and Critical Essays; to be published once a week, or once a fortnight, which I entitled 'The Phantasm.' I have yet written only one paper; and it may probably die here, like a thousand other visions; perhaps your assistance might encourage me to go on.

"I have not time even to read over this."

"Lee, Jan. 28, 1812.

"Dear Sir,—Though I am pressed by the printers to finish the number of the Bibliographer, which ought to appear next Saturday, and which waits for the conclusion of the Preface to the 'Helicon,' yet I must postpone everything till I have made some answer, however brief, to your

most gratifying letters. I assure you they have given me a pleasure which I know not that I ever received from any literary correspondence before. I had not flattered myself I had been so fortunate as to obtain such notice as your kindness proves to me. Such encouragement at an earlier period of life would have given me energy to attempt something less unworthy the approbation you so delight me by conferring. And if you should see Mr. Walter Scott or Lord Buchan, have the goodness to say to them how deeply sensible I am of the honour of not having utterly escaped their attention. Your letters have imparted a glow to me that puts me in good humour with existence, and makes me sigh at the reflection of the grey hairs that now probably will allow no remaining time for the realizing those dreams of fiction, which my early ambition aspired to describe, but which the blights of the world persuaded me that I was unequal to. I declare to you, that for the first time in my life, your letters have filled me with self-complacence; a self-complacence which I am convinced is necessary for the due exertion of our powers.

"To me those bursts of description, such as the early part of your letter contains, and which seem so congenial to your constant taste, are among the primary and most attractive features of genius.

But before I ventured to write further, I have turned to the Review of Campbell, No. 27, E. R., and read over the first four pages, which are to the highest degree admirable and just; I will read the rest the first leisure moment.

"All these things, someway, burst upon me like new light, and give a new colour to my being. The days of early enchantment appear to revive. Now that I have found one who thinks with me on such subjects, I shall be emboldened to indulge in those fairyisms, which I hitherto was too much scared by the ridicule of the world to utter without restraint. Were your effusions, instead of being truly simple and beautiful as they are, what your diffidence would sometimes represent them, still I should cherish them with affection and admiration, as coming from one to whom I owe the first praise that ever was completely satisfactory to me! It puts me in perfect humour with myself; covers all Nature with a smile, and fills me with every virtuous and philanthropic emotion! I now know, when I am gone, there is one who will have entered into all my romantic feelings, and will have an opportunity of representing me as I have wished to be, and as I am now, from your testimony willing to flatter myself that I am. If Providence indulges me with a few more years of life, I will endeavour to deserve

your kind commendations. Encouraged by you, I will strive to throw into some prose romance the wild feelings that I have hitherto not ventured to utter.

"From my very boyhood I had an incontrollable desire of authorship; and thought the most enviable ambition was to gain an empire over the minds of others. There is a most beautiful passage on this subject in Cowper's 'Task,' where he claims for the recluse author, the use and importance which he may possess in society. We live in an age, in which those writers, who happen to be favourites, possess their full sway over the public mind. And what a glorious power it is! What emperor has reason to be so proud as Walter Scott! How he finds so much time for his literary pursuits is a matter of perfect astonishment with me. For my part, I can never find a day or an hour uninterrupted: even this short letter thus far has met with three interruptions, by justice matters and other business, all which things totally destroy the train and flow of one's thoughts, and utterly dissipate that delightful abstraction, which makes one forget the turmoils of ordinary life!

"Mine has hitherto been an existence of anxiety and disappointment; of agitated nerves, and overwhelming cares! Beautiful, as far as Wyat's

genius in gothic architecture can go, as is this house (*my son's*) with its polished grounds, in which I am now resident, I seldom am at leisure and ease to enjoy it. The bolder features of Caledonia, which you describe so nobly, fill my mind with more interest. O that I could shut myself up, and dream the dreams of Bards, without the intrusion of worldly cares! How endless are the charms of Nature, such as a poet can fancy them, and with what a set of enchanting beings can he people those scenes! Never was my imagination lighted up with such a train of ideas as by Jeffrey's critique on Alison. Here, I thought, is the true principle of poetry blazing upon us at once. And O! what creations have been huddled up in fogs by the cold chilling effects of dull, malignant, technical, and short-sighted critics.

"Again interrupted—I must here therefore, however reluctantly, close this letter; or the printers and publishers, who must have a parcel this evening, will lose all patience. Yet to delay to send this by this very post, would argue a coldness and insensibility to your kindness, and to the very great honour you do me, which would make me utterly undeserving of them. You must not make apologies for letters, which give me such sincere and acute delight. If I have not answered them so often, it is partly for the want

of franks, and partly from the very heavy pressure on my time, which my various and inconcordant occupations create.

"The 'Bellenden' article is printed, its introduction is exactly what such ought to be, and of which I wish the Bibliographer contained more examples. The Maitland MS. shall appear in next number.

"I trust that having gained the valuable accession of your correspondence, it will not now be withdrawn from me; that you will write with the full confidence that whatever you shall say must be interesting to me; that nothing from your pen can be feeble, still less require apology; and that you will allow me to subscribe myself with the utmost sincerity,

"Your truly obliged and grateful friend,

SAMUEL EGERTON BRYDGES."

"P.S.—I need not say how gratifying any correspondence with Mr. W. Scott, or Lord Buchan would be. I was once honoured with a letter from the former, which I keep among my treasures."

"No. 11, Hinde Street, Manchester Square,
London. Feb. 23, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—Your three letters of the 12th, 15th, and 17th, are just arrived in a packet from Lee; and as usual, I sit down to thank you for them immediately after having perused them. I can truly say I feel a total deficience of language adequate to convey a sense of your kindness, which has conferred a pleasure on me such as I never before experienced, and had the effect of acting as an antidote to some of those mortifications which by gradual pressure were sinking my spirit into the earth. I do not mean to presume to indulge the hope that I deserve this approbation your goodness bestows on me; but the triumph is great indeed even by good luck to have gained the notice of such a mind as yours, already in the possession of the friendship of men so immeasurably my superiors. But this I will say, that such encouragement as yours of the passages you allude to, would, if received long since, have ere this produced more regular and longer efforts in the same way, which perhaps might have been less undeserving your commendation.

"I write this, though no post goes out to-day, being Sunday, as I shall be engaged in business

all to-morrow, and on Tuesday am going down for a few days to Lee, from whence I shall return at the end of the week.

"I hope you received my last, which was written to you on (I think) the 12th instant.

"When I took up my pen, I hoped to have gone through the sheet uninterrupted; but the various cares and business of a large family seldom allow my hopes in this respect to be realized. A concern of my second son, a lieutenant in the 14th Dragoons, now in Portugal, has broke in upon me to worry me, and the glow into which your letter had put me, is again dissipated.

"I shall await with impatience the letters you are so good as to promise for the Bibliographer: they will be in the highest degree acceptable.

"Assure Lord Buchan and Mr. W. Scott how very sincerely I am gratified by their notice. With regard to Mr. D. Stewart, a similar notice is more than I dare hope—any more than I should have hoped Lord Buchan's or Mr. Scott's before you announced it to me.

"The description of your chateau is strongly interesting to me, and connects itself with all those associations in which one is most fond to indulge. You cannot too often or too unreservedly describe your own feelings—the feelings of a mind dipped in all the brightest colours of

genius, and irradiated with imagery as moral as it is brilliant.

"For me, if you could know the immeasurable sorrows and gigantic difficulties which have darkened my life, you might reasonably wonder that I have one faint gleam of fancy, or one feeble spring of intellectual power still remaining. Even my men of business praise me for the fortitude under trials, which they say would have sunk any other man, but which have never extinguished my enthusiasm for literature, nor my occasional excursions into the fields of fiction.

"This day Mr. Haslewood, my industrious coadjutor in the 'Bibliographer,' dines with me, and we shall talk over with unqualified pleasure your kindness, your accomplishments, and that career of fame which we shall anticipate for you:—for to one of such endowments as yourself, with such an early start for the goal, fame is certain,—while the advantages of such friends as Lord Buchan, Mr. W. Scott, and Mr. Stewart, will encourage you to persevere unawed by the possible malignity of vulgar minds.

For me, I cannot doubt that I must lose something in your estimation, as more intercourse with me more clearly opens the defects of which I cannot but be conscious. My dull letters will prove to you, that you have given me credit far

beyond what I am entitled to. But after having been delighted with the possession, let me lose as little as possible of a treasure which I value so highly, that the spirits it has given me would now sink without it.

"A sort of morbid feeling, which forces me to turn with disgust from coarse manners, makes me unpopular with the generality of society. This gives to an openness of disposition, which is faulty by its excess, an appearance of reserve, often interpreted into pride, and generates offence that is returned by the most malignant hatred and envy. What a counterbalance to all this is the acquirement of such a friend as yourself! You will not wonder, therefore, if I cannot bear to contemplate the chance of losing it.

"My paper warns me here to close; perhaps to-morrow I shall be able to get a frank—and in that case, I hope to have time to scribble another sheet.

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Most truly yours,

"S. E. Brydges."

"11, Hinde Street, Manchester Square,
London, June 26, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—The wish to write you long letters, makes me defer writing at all in the hurry of this town, till I fear the loss of your friendship by my delay. A pressure of private affairs added to the Roxburgh sale have for the last month taken up all my time. The papers have announced to you the mania which has attended that sale; and I am afraid that I have felt some of its infection. The Caxtons have risen to an incredible price. I have seen here your Edinburgh Bookseller, Constable, who speaks of you in terms becoming the high character and endowments belonging to you. For my part, your kindness to me, however undeserved, has given me a new existence; thrown some self-complacence on the exercise of my pursuits; and really, in point of happiness, made me a different being. Yet I will confess, it is not unattended with an anxiety that I may not be able to continue to retain your good opinion, as further acquaintance with my humble talents may take away the partiality you are now so good as to indulge.

"You are so good as to ask after my publications. The first thing I ever saw in print of

mine is a copy of love verses, which I sent to the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' and which appeared there in January 1784. They are introduced by a few lines pretending them to be by a decayed author. They are addressed to Lucy L—, and are reprinted in my poems: they were the expression of real, and not fictitious feelings.

"To the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' I suspect that my communications have not been less than one hundred, perhaps one hundred and fifty; but they are mostly antiquarian or biographical. I wrote a few papers last year in a periodical work at Canterbury, by some military friends, called 'The Whim,' and some years ago, about thirty letters in a newspaper on Finance and Political arithmetic of a temporary nature, as well as some on one of our contested county elections.

"For the last four months, I have been rather collecting the materials for future research, than making use of them. I have bought largely at the sales both of Lord Townshend, and the Duke of Roxburgh; and among them are some very curious books, particularly Historical and Genealogical.

"The next number of the 'Bibliographer' will be published on July 1st. Unfortunately I mislaid your Maitland extract till too late. It is now at the printer's; but it cannot come in till

next month. We have obtained great accession of strength from Oxford, and the Bodleian Library. Mr. Coneybeare (Poetry Professor), Mr. Bliss, editor of the forthcoming 'Wood's Athenæ,' Mr. Bardwell, &c.

"The Roxburgh calls, and I must finish this letter on my return.

"Saturday, June 27.

"I have just got Mr. Giddy's frank; I am too late to write more, except a few lines of thanks to Lord Buchan, which I enclose.

"Very truly yours,

"S. E. Brydges."

"Hinde Street, July 27, 1812.
Monday.

"My Dear Sir,—I have not words sufficiently strong to convey to you the gratitude I feel for your friendship and kindness, and that sort of balm and placidness which they throw over a mind naturally too anxious and fearful of itself; while they have not the effect upon it of raising vanity, but of infusing benevolence and good humour with existence. I consider the attainment of your friendship and favourable opinion, not only as the highest reward I have received, but as a reward quite ample for all my literary

toils. If I ever yet should perform anything which should reach nearer to the ideas of excellence which I have formed in my mind, it will be entirely owing to your encouragement.

"But it is to your future productions that I look for all those glowing tints of real genius, of which your heart and fancy seem to be the very fountains. It is from feelings such as yours that spring those colours of composition which never die. The artifices of writing are nothing; the heart is the well-head of all true poetry.

"To-morrow I shall set off with my family to Tunbridge Wells, some of my children having been ill. Thence I shall pay renewed visits to my favourite Penshurst, the deserted seat of the Sydneys, which is in its neighbourhood; and of which I hope to give you some account. It is not improbable that from that source I received my first romantic tincture. There my mother was born and brought up, among the Sydneys. Perhaps the earliest names of celebrity with which I was familiar, were Sir Philip, and the future poet of his birthplace, Waller.

"I think I could make an interesting octavo volume of Sydney Memoirs. The materials are already at hand, in the two bulky volumes of State Papers of the Family, published by Arthur Collins about 1748, fol.

"This reminds me to inform you that at length my edition of Collins' Peerage is finished. I return the last proof this morning. It forms nine thick octavo volumes, of nearly seven hundred closely printed pages, on an average, in each volume; which has necessitated the bookseller to fix on it the heavy price of nine guineas. It has been a laborious job, and I feel much relieved at throwing it off my hands.

"The scheme you suggest about Ballantyne's press is very highly flattering to me. Nothing would gratify me more, if he would think it worth while, without paying anything for the copy. But I am afraid that what I have already done will take away the principal part. I have now in the press, 'The Ruminator,' and one volume, viz., as far as No. 45, is already printed. Query, if the rest will be sufficient to make a volume? But I could easily find original matter for whatever would be required to make up a volume of sufficient size! What if there were a few sketches of character, poets and statesmen?"

"Tunbridge Wells, Kent,
"July 31, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—You perceive I had not time to finish my letter before I left London. I reached this place with my numerous tribe of children on Wednesday evening.

"Pray thank Mr. Weber for his promised assistance, which will be very acceptable. To Mr. Walter Scott I shall take the liberty to write soon.

"In the next 'Bibliographer' you will see a curious article on the author of 'Chevy Chace,' by Mr. Coneybeare, the Poetry Professor at Oxford. He has clearly proved the ballad to be by R. Sheele, who lived in the reign of Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth. Painter's 'Palace of Pleasure' is reprinting under Mr. Haslewood's care. Of the curious book you mention, I think there was a copy in George Steevens' Library.

"I entreat you to let me hear from you, and never think about franks or postage.

"Very truly yours,

"S. E. Brydges."

"Tunbridge Wells, Nov. 15, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—Your letters are among the greatest gratifications I receive; and I only regret that the perpetual hurry of business and cares, in which I live, prevents my answering them as I ought. Ten letters at least, in every day; two sheets for the printers, and many arrangements perplexing to my spirits, allow no leisure for the exercise of those better faculties, which alone should be

called forth towards you. There is nothing I regret more, than not having been earlier acquainted with the writings of Dugald Stewart; he would have taught me to philosophize my mind, and given me confidence, where the want of it has made me lose so many years in idleness and despair. He is the only metaphysical writer who enters into the spirit of genius, and against whom one's feelings do not revolt, and cry out, '*this cannot be just.*' He, on the contrary, everywhere carries along with him my assent. I am ashamed to say, that, for the first time, last night I read some of his 'Chapters on the Philosophy of the Human Mind.' He fills me with admiration and delight, while others, called philosophers, chill and confound me. I think I am not yet too old to let my conceptions, and the discipline of my intellects, benefit by what I learn from him.

"I imagine that in my unassisted efforts I have been often blundering, through a sort of twilight, of what I find so clearly, simply and demonstrably explained by him. Should I hereafter have leisure to attempt any pictures of the human intellect, I flatter myself I shall draw them less imperfectly from the light he has afforded me.

"You have youth, and golden days, and years before you. Do not let the beautiful visions which are always flitting across you vanish

like the shapes of the passing clouds. Your glowing imagery is chastened by those moral colours which make Gray almost the first of poets, and which alone can make the interest of compositions permanent! Fantastic combinations, which strike powerfully from their novelty, will cease to delight with the cessation of the cause. Such poets, however great their genius, 'pluck only a deciduous laurel.' I am now encouraged by Dugald Stewart to think that the habits and temperament of a poet's mind, which are so enchanting, when properly disciplined, are as amiable, virtuous, and even useful as they are enchanting.

"Your mind has been steeped in the very fountains of Genius! You appear never to look abroad but with the eyes of a poet; and the shortest line you write breathes sensibility and fancy. Your last stanzas have upon my feelings a kind of magical effect, which has not subsided in four-and-twenty hours!

"My own life has been a life of the severest trials: sufficient to have broken the spirit, and destroyed the faculties of any one. I believe that my sanguine temper, and the strength with which my fancy irradiated the figures of Hope, could alone have borne me forward. At length, on the verge of fifty, the clouds appear to be giving way before my perseverance. Yet it is

doubtful, if I can now have any chance of making a figure in public life. I have hitherto done better than I could expect in addressing the meetings at a public election. I find that by being slow, I can sufficiently command the language I require, and that as my feelings are deeply touched by encouragement, I have hitherto been listened to, as much as, or more than, I merited. But in the House of Commons the case will be quite different. There I shall have to contend with powerful spirits made ready and perfect by practice; who commenced at an age when the mind was docile, and the faculties fresh.

"Yet I rejoice at the idea of entering on this arena. I have a busy spirit, which rather likes to buffet with tempests, and ride upon the whirlwind. It sharpens my powers such as they are; and gives a double zest to intervening quiet. In short, I suspect that I have an incurable kind of romance about me, which age itself will not deaden.

"It is an odd coincidence that about two hundred years ago, the marriage of a sister drew my ancestor far away from the family property and connections to *Maidstone;* and *thence*, after struggling for the succeeding generations with a small patrimony and obscurity, I am again, for the first time, returned into public life. There, too,

I spent the first four years of my school-boy life from July 1771, to June 1775.

"You mention assistance from Scott, Jeffrey, &c. I know its value; but how am I to obtain it? I am too proud, by soliciting, to incur the hazard of a refusal.

"I wish I could persuade you to take the *principal* part with me in a new set of moral and critical essays, to be published periodically. YOUR literary acquaintance at Edinburgh would get assistance, though I could not.

"I expect to go to town in a few days.

"Very truly yours,

"S. E. BRYDGES."

"Hinde Street, Nov. 26, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—I have only a few minutes to scratch a few lines to thank you for all your truly valuable papers, which I receive and read with the greatest delight, and commit to the press with pride.

"In the hurry of the recent period, so important in my life, aggravated by a more than common quantity of private business, I cannot pretend to clothe in words any of those tumultuous yet gratifying feelings which are rolling in almost simultaneous waves through my head and my heart. Indeed, had I time, I am not sure that I should be

bold enough to express them; they would appear too wild and visionary for *my* sober years, whose hairs are completely grey, and cheeks furrowed with anxiety, disappointment, and neglect. It seems as if there was now a dawn of a few happier years before me! Or is this gleam deceitful?

"Now, for the first time, I imagine that I could become a poet, had I leisure to put into language what I feel!

"I have presumed to write to Walter Scott. I have put on the direction 'Edinburgh' only, but of course that will find him.

"Sam Rogers' 'Voyage of Columbus' is just come out in a new edition of his Poems. I have not yet had time to read it. Scott's 'Epistles from Ettrick Forest' are among my favourites of all his productions.

"Yours most truly,

"S. E. B."

"11, Hinde Street, Manchester Square,
Nov. 28th, 1812.

"My dear Sir,—The expectation of your letters turns the rap of the postman into a pleasure. All that you mention are safely come to hand; and most of them already printed. Indeed, all but that which you desired me to withdraw, and one which by accident I left at Tunbridge Wells, and

which will come up with Lady Brydges on Monday. I assure you they lose nothing by being in print. The last went to the compositor yesterday. In a few days I will send you the first volume and all that is printed of the second, which is as far as 200 pages.

"The three last letters I have received from you are of the dates of the 21st, 23rd, 24th Nov.

"I am most anxious for the sight of the sheet of 'Solitude,' and for 'Erminia.' It is impossible for me not to be delighted with anything you write.

"I dare not hope for the approbation of Jeffrey, whose powers of criticism on poetry are quite inimitable, but sometimes surely rather severe. Where one differs from him, it is quite out of the power of any man of taste not to be affected with extreme admiration at his originality, his vigour, the nicety of his discrimination, and the brilliance of his fancy. But I am not sure that I have nerve to face, by anticipation, the sharpness of his wit.

"Whatever destroys my self-confidence, or self-complacence, destroys my little powers.

"I have the pleasure to say, that I had a letter from Walter Scott by yesterday's post, in answer to a short one of mine. I shall reply to it in a few days. I should be proud if I could get one paper from him for the 'Ruminator.'

"I think I shall follow your advice on this subject: namely, publish the two volumes, of which the second is already nearly finished, as soon as the papers reach 100. I then propose a third volume, with a request of contributions.

"But if you knew how my time is taken up, you would not wonder that I do so little in the literary way. My thoughts are not less fitted for the matter of composition than they used to be; but I have no leisure to commit them to paper. Visions swarm before my fancy, and every object arrays itself in the warmest colouring: but they fade again without an attempt to fix them, and leave no track behind.

"If I should have the good luck to be able to *speak* (which I dare not flatter myself I shall), I may perhaps have the opportunity of embodying some of them, because oral delivery is so much more rapid than the pen; and with me the thought and the language rise together; so that I have often lost them again, before the whole can be committed to paper: but in speaking they may be communicated as quick as they spring up.

"A seat in Parliament incalculably increases my happiness, not, I hope, from any mixture of childish vanity, but from a due sense of the importance of its duties, and an anxious desire to perform them. I love to revolve and to endea-

vour to put in practice the true principles of legislation, and look with impatience to the opportunity, which I trust to find, of ameliorating some things which seem to cry out for amendment. Yet do not think me a reformer: they call me the reverse, which I most strenuously deny. I am such a whig as Burke was; and I believe him to have been a true one, of the old stamp: nor can I find the least inconsistency in his public conduct, from his *first* days to his *last*. My poor intellect is not capable of seeing any inconsistency in his opposing the American war, and supporting that in favour of the Bourbons.

"I should now be happy were it not for the dreadful loss we experienced in the Spring. The reflection of that loss returns like a cloud over every gleam of brightness. My heart sinks that he, poor fellow, did not live to see my ambition begin to be gratified. He had been chilled, in common with the rest of my children, by the driving storms of my adversity: how would his heart have expanded at the prospect of better days!

"I have been bound down by all the chains of iron that malice and envy could forge; but I have broken them all, and rise perhaps invigorated by my exertions.

"What a memoir could I write, were it not for the private disclosures it would make!

"I wrote a letter to you a few days ago, addressed to Balmakewan. I hope now that you are at Edinburgh, less time will be lost in the passage.

"Most truly yours,

"S. E. B."

"Hinde Street, March 18, 1813.

"My very dear Sir,—I have only received your two enclosures long enough to read through your poetical fragment, with a degree of unfeigned admiration and astonishment, such as no poem since Beattie's 'Minstrel' ever gave me! But it is out of all proportion superior to Beattie's: it is *throughout* equal to that which Beattie has only reached in one or two stanzas. It is perfect *inspiration!* It is as far superior to any the best composition of any living poet, as Shakspeare, and Milton, and Spenser, are to the dead. It is the voice of the Muse herself, divested of any earthly alloy! Never, except in the very finest passages of Shakspeare, and Milton, and Gray, have I been so delighted and elevated with poetry before. You recall me again to my original propensities! I feel a desire to forsake this hateful turmoil of worldly ambition, and go back again to the woods to enjoy my day dreams!

"What must be the work which contains such poetry? Nay, I entreat, that *I*, at least, may, in confidence, see a copy of the printed sheets. I cannot guess what would be the objection to the publication.

"Be assured that all the compositions, from this moment, of other living poets will appear comparatively as nothing to me.

"If I could attend to any minor delight in the delirium of pleasure, which this fragment gives me, it would be in the confirmation of my own first taste, from the tone of your earliest correspondence with me, in which I saw all those hues of vivid genius that so very, very rarely appear in the world!

"I said long ago, that YOUR partiality towards me was by far the greatest and most gratifying compliment I had ever received. What must I think of it now, when you have fixed yourself on my mind, beyond all competition, the greatest genius of the age!

"Do not accuse me of fulsome compliment! I am incapable of saying what I do not think. I am old enough now to be confident in the reliance on certain unsophisticated feelings of delight, which nothing short of true genius can raise. I am quite sure that the admiration and glow of mind which your fragment raised while reading

it, not only in particular passages, but throughout, could not be fallacious.

"For myself, I feel that I have within me only faint gleams of that light, which your more powerful genius can expand into a blaze of splendour.

"You have in the course of nature to outlive me by a generation, and the only chance I shall have of being remembered will be in the notice your partiality will have taken of me.

"You are the only one with whom I ever yet was in intimacy, of a mind sufficiently congenial to pursue out the train of my thoughts and character, and to do justice to what would, under better auspices, have been the exhibited traits of my intellectual operations.

"I have been interrupted here, and a more than ordinary pressure of business will not allow me to write any more now.

"Very truly yours,

"S. E. Brydges."

"London, March 29, 1813.

"My dear Sir,—I am most impatient for your 'Solitude,' which is not yet arrived.

"I have been again reading this morning your most enchanting poem with fresh delight. Indeed I do not flatter you when I refer to what I said in my former letter. You seem to me *inspired.*

You have all the soul of true poetry without a taint of the trickery of the false.

"If I could envy, I should envy you. But I hope I have purged my mind from all envy, if it was naturally inclined to it. I look to you with a *wish* that I could aspire to equality; but that *wish* creates admiration, not envy! The world, I mean that world which is worth commanding, the world of mighty intellect, is within your grasp.

"With the most sincere admiration,

"Yours ever,

"S. E. B."

I must beg to refer back to my remarks in page 86, as conveying my best excuse for inserting such letters as these last, firmly believing, as I do, that good-nature, and a disposition to discover merit in others, is a distinguishing trait of an elevated mind, as the *penchant* to captious and sarcastic censure is of a mean one.

I had, indeed, intended to revive in this place some fragments of those identical productions in verse and prose which Sir Egerton mentions so favourably, but though they were, for a short time, at my command, when these memoirs were in progress, they have all drifted out of my grasp *now*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.—HIS FACILITY IN COMPOSITION.—THE "QUEEN'S WAKE."—JOHN PINKERTON.—HE RESIDES WITH THE AUTHOR FOR THREE MONTHS.—HIS ECCENTRICITIES.—THE AUTHOR'S FIRST MEETING WITH THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.—VARIOUS RECOLLECTIONS.

On my return to Edinburgh next winter, ill health rendered my attendance at the Parliament House out of the question. I did nothing more than keep up industriously my correspondence with Sir Egerton Brydges. Lord Buchan, who lived hard by, was our frequent and almost only visitor. Finding my new house objectionable for some trifling reason or another, I removed in January 1813, to one more eligible in Northumberland Street, whither I transferred from the country, a large quantity of books and some pictures.

Here, I feel right glad to break the yarn of egotism, by introducing for the first time to my readers, a character with whom I kept up habits of intimacy for many years, and who certainly was the most thorough-bred and indubitable original whom it was possible to meet in all Scot-

land:—I mean James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. Most truly, if Burns was deservedly considered a wonder, on account of the disadvantages which he surmounted in early life, Hogg was, by parity of reasoning, a supernatural wonder, seeing that, up to the age of twenty, he could scarcely read his Bible, and at that epoch first taught himself writing, by copying with great effort from printed books. From this date onwards, I believe his literary career to have been *sui generis*, and altogether unexampled! I never forget a remark of Mr. Southey's, when he honoured me with a visit at a time of year when Edinburgh was deserted, namely, that among all our literary characters the only one whom he then felt particularly desirous to meet again was the Ettrick Shepherd. With very pardonable vanity, Hogg repeatedly wrote memoirs of himself. He has recorded the feelings of surprise, delight, and triumph with which he heard one of his own ballads chaunted by a country girl, who had no suspicion that the Shepherd, whom she met daily, was its author. But it may be noted as a yet more remarkable instance of his unexpected influence, that long before James Hogg was generally known, my learned uncle, Dr. Gillies, who had never even heard of his name, nevertheless got hold in London of his afterwards well known stanzas, commencing

"My name it is Donald Macdonald,
I live in the Hielands sae grand," &c.

and these he treasured in memory, and sang as often as he felt himself in jovial or patriotic mood.

I don't think that any two poets could be more unlike in disposition and temperament than Burns and Hogg. The former was from youth to manhood a prey to alternating fits of excitement and despondency; he wrote for the most part with care and difficulty, and in his productions there was condensed force. Hogg, on the contrary, had his joyous moods, seemingly without any reaction of gloom; with the help of "the sclate," he composed with great facility, and had a dislike to corrections afterwards; his temper was sustained and equable; his ambition, though stedfast, was of a quiet character, and though baffled, as it often happened, in his purpose, he was never for a moment cast down.

Surely there never has been any instance of the pursuit of literature under circumstances more untoward than those which the Shepherd so cheerfully encountered. Take, for example, the difficulties attending his first attempt at publication. Being appointed to the vastly pleasant and poetical task of driving a herd of cattle from Ettrick to Edinburgh (for All Hallow Fair) in the dreary

month of November, he suddenly conceived the notion of getting a volume into print, but having no manuscript in hand, he tried during his walks to remember the verses, and as often as they recurred ran into a shop to borrow a stump of pen and morsel of paper to note them down. In this way copy was provided; luckily for his purpose, he found a good-natured printer, and an octavo volume, or pamphlet, was produced in a week, with which he returned in triumph to the Forest.

Walter Scott could not persuade himself that the author of this *brochure* could ever live by mere verse-making, and as a better speculation, recommended that the author should turn his thorough knowledge of sheep-farming to account in districts where it was not so well understood as in Ettrick and Yarrow. In furtherance of this plan, Hogg took a walk from Ettrick, across hill and dale, into Argyleshire, whence he embarked for the island of Harris, intending, if he met with encouragement, to take a farm there, but nothing came of it. The next we hear of him is that he had found some kindly disposed though humble friends, at Edinburgh, and had with their help put together a volume of poetry, entitled the "Forest Minstrel," moreover that, to the utter amazement of the said friends, he had set up a new weekly paper, entitled "The Spy," consisting of strictures

on the state of manners, morals, and literary taste in the modern Athens, and varied by original stories and poems. Wonderful to tell, this work written by himself alone (in large quarto sheets with double columns) went on regularly for a year or more. A new weekly journal, to be penned exclusively by one and the same hand, would have been a stout undertaking for any literary man; it was altogether marvellous on the part of a lonely illiterate shepherd.

About this time James Hogg tenanted a room at a suburban residence near Stockbridge. It was a weather-beaten, rather ghostly, solitary looking domicile, like an old farm-house in the country. At this tranquil abode he finished, within an incredibly short time, the "Queen's Wake," which, as he said, when once begun, "went on of itself." Indeed, he always ascribed a separate vitality and *volonté* to his compositions, so that it was not his business to carry them on; on the contrary, they carried on their author, and carried him away, till at last he wondered even more than others did, at his own work! "Aye, ye 're a learned man," he sometimes said to me in after years; "there 's nae doubt about that, wi' your Virgils and Homers and Dantés and Petrarchs. But aiblins ye mind yon fragment upon the sclate that ye despised t'ither morn-

ing. Eh man, sin syne, it 's ettling to turn out the vera best thing I ever composed ; and that 's no saying little, ye ken ! "

The " Queen's Wake," when completed, was so extraordinary that it soon found a publisher. It appeared in 1813, just after I had migrated from Castle Street to Northumberland Street, and I never forget the impression it made on my mind at the first perusal. Till then Hogg had only been talked of as an eccentric being, uncouth and rude in manners, who had written divers clever songs and ballads, which appeared in magazines and newspapers. But the " Queen's Wake" instantly lifted him up to an entirely new and unexpected grade on the Scottish Parnassus. Almost every poem of length which came out in those days, was less or more an imitation of Scott or Byron. But Hogg decidedly struck a key-note of his own. There was a freshness, a vigour, and variety, a bold and joyous spirit in the long ballads here strung together, which riveted the attention of every one not impassive to poetical impressions. I treasured up this volume, and watched for an opportunity to make the author's acquaintance personally, which did not present itself till the following summer.

This winter, after I had brought my books from the country and arranged them in a large

room, Sir Walter Scott not unfrequently wandered down to Northumberland Street, whence he would sometimes walk away with a load of books, stowing three or four volumes into each capacious pocket, and carrying others on his arm. On one of these occasions, he prepared me for a visit, at his suggestion, from the well-known John Pinkerton, then a visitor at Edinburgh, who, for his forthcoming tragedy of the Countess of Strathearn, desiderated an epilogue, which he had requested of Scott in vain. As it was impossible on my part to plead any great pressure of business, I readily agreed to read the tragedy, and to write the epilogue, with which, when achieved, Mr. Pinkerton was entirely satisfied, saying that it "glowed with genuine poetry." It turned out, however, that an epilogue was not required, for the Countess of Strathearn, when tried upon the Edinburgh stage, was decisively condemned—a result which Sir Walter had no doubt foreseen.

Perhaps the less that I say of John Pinkerton the better, inasmuch as my notice of him cannot be very favourable. He became afterwards my frequent guest, and in the autumn of that year spent three months with us in the country. He had figured in the world as a poet, a bibliographer, historian, archæologist, geographer, and geologist. It was by his two vols. of early Scottish poems,

published from MSS. in the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, that he was best known to me; and for the merits of this production alone I should have been willing to bear with or overlook his overweening egoism and numberless eccentricities, in consequence of which, when he left Edinburgh in 1814, there were but three individuals in the whole community with whom he remained on speaking terms, namely, Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Thomas Thomson, and my obscure self. He had ample worldly shrewdness (in pecuniary matters at least), great perseverance and power of research, was a fierce and uncompromising critic of all works, either in prose or verse, excepting his own; and for one who did not feel disposed to quarrel with his dictatorial manner and bizarre notions, his conversation, from its variety, afforded an inexhaustible stock of amusement.

In his capacity of critic sometimes he did not spare even himself, as when he remarked that at one period of his youth he had wished only to live so long as to complete and publish his volume entitled "Rhymes, by Mr. Pinkerton," which he then thought a grand poetical achievement, but which he now regarded with contempt or pity. He had special notions about the perfection of art, and the duty which devolves on a poet in that particular. According to him, it was quite enough, in order

to merit immortal honour, if an author, during his whole life-time, produced only one solitary sonnet deserving to be called good and perfect of its kind. As such, it must be moulded strictly on the Petrarchan model as to rhymes; for otherwise it was no sonnet at all, but merely a "quatuorzain."

"Pinkie Winkie" and I had differences of opinion, and arguments grounded thereon every day, yet we never quarrelled. Our mode of life in the country was regularly and pleasantly arranged. In the mornings we seldom met at all, his hour of breakfast being later than mine; but usually about twelve or one o'clock, at his suggestion, the carriage was brought to the door for an excursion to pay visits, or search after antiquities and geologistic specimens. I often found time to compose a sonnet whilst my venerable Mentor's thoughts were engrossed with Roman camps, Caledonian stations, green earth, plumb-pudding, agate, jasper, quartz, and hornblend. Some few of those sonnets he thought tolerable; but I cannot refer to any one, for they have all perished.

I remember divers pleasant afternoons spent in this manner, cheered by autumnal sunshine, especially one at Finella's Castle (or rather the foundations thereof), near to Fettercairn House, where we were hospitably received by my friends Sir John and Lady Jane Stewart. My learned

companion was stoutly provided with anecdotes of this eccentric lady (Finella, I mean), and sedulously pointed out to me how far the building had extended originally, and how very strong a fortress it must have been. In the same neighbourhood is a Roman camp, which, of course, engaged his especial veneration. Another ruin of a different kind (for its lofty towers were still standing) dwells on my recollection—I mean Edzel, one of the many possessions of Lord Panmure. Here "Pinkie" found less of interest than I did, because the castle happens not to figure prominently in Scottish history. No sorceress, like Finella, was remembered here, and we could only conjecture what sort of beings its inhabitants once were. At Edzel, the most remarkable trait, in my estimation, was the remains of a large pleasure garden adjoining the walls, with terraces and such like, in which no baronial owner had taken his pleasure for at least two centuries, and in which, strange to tell, perennial flowers yet sprung up and bloomed here and there, of a race belonging to that epoch when the castle was in its glory. But of all our haunts, that which best pleased my eccentric guest was the agate quarry, near the town of Montrose, where he would work with his hammer for hours together among the green earth and plumb-pudding blocks; indeed, would not have come away till dusk, if I

had not reminded him that dinner would be spoiled. On his departure in November, his room was lumbered by specimens, a selection from which I afterwards sent to him by a Montrose vessel.

But to return, as I had little or no acquaintance with the select society which the Ettrick Shepherd frequented at Edinburgh, I followed Professor Wilson's advice, and called on him without ceremony at an apartment which, having left Stockbridge, he then rented from a hackney coachman under the North Bridge. To my agreeable surprise, I was received as cordially, and with as little ceremony, as if there had been a previous acquaintance betwixt us of many years. I found with him his publisher, Mr. Goldie, who soon took his leave; and on my surmising that my visit had interrupted business, he desired me to be quiet on that score, as no visits could be more unimportant to him than those of his publisher. "I have been trying this half hour," said he "to bring him to business, but ye micht as weel try to grip an eel by the tail."

"But the 'Queen's Wake' ought to be a fortune to its author," said I; "and it will not always do for a poet to rest content with deserving reward which he never gains."

"The fortune will no come oot o' Goldie then," said the Shepherd; "he has never paid saxpence

yet, unless it be to the printer, and even that 's no settled. But aiblins ye think owre muckle o' the 'Queen's Wake.' It's tolerably gude, I 'll no deny that; but, eh man, that 's naething compared wi' what I am able to do! I hae a grand poyem upon the sclate yenoo, that fashes me rather, for it wants to rin on faster than I can copy with the pen. Ye 'll think but little o' the 'Queen's Wake' when ye come to see that!"

The "sclate" was before him, covered with very close writing, and I naturally expressed a wish to hear some portion of what must be so extraordinary, to which he responded briskly—"Na, na, fules and bairns should never see wark half done!" I insisted that Voltaire had his old woman, and that Scott had been in the habit of consulting with William Erskine and other friends on his poems as they advanced. "That 's vera like a man that 's frighted to gang by himsel, and needs some body to lead him! Eh man, neither William Erskine, nor ony critic beneath the sun shall ever lead *mei!* If I hae na sense eneuch to mak and mend my ain wark, no other hands or heads shall meddle wi' it; I want nae help, thank God, neither from books nor men."

Be it here observed once for all, that the good Shepherd's vanity differed from that of all other authors, inasmuch as it was avowed and undis-

guised, and he himself laughed at it objectively as such. It never for one instant appeared to me as arrogance or self-conceit; on the contrary, it was mere native eccentricity, or in better words, decision of character. He had great power and facility of composition after his own manner; was naturally conscious of this power, and of course placed reliance on himself. As to Fortune's smiles or frowns, he little needed to care. Every day he was sure of being hospitably received somewhere or another at dinner, after which came unfailingly the Glenlivat punch; and as for his house-rent and all expenses of living in other respects, I suppose *25l.* per annum (perhaps less) would have been ample.

We might have talked for hours, but having an engagement, I said my object in coming was not merely to make, but pave the way for improving our acquaintance, and I wished to know whether and when he would favour me with his company at dinner.

"Eh man, I 'll come at your kale-time, whenever ye 're sure o' being at hame and I 'm no engaged; but this day, aiblins, ye 'll tak your denner wi' *mei*, at Wullie Young's. He 's a border man, and will be richt glad to see yow, or ony ither freend o' mine. The morn I'm engaged for a grand music party at Grieve's, and the

next day at James Gray's, but after that I'm at your service."

The acquaintance thus begun was kept up uninterruptedly and cordially from 1813, till my departure from Edinburgh for London in 1827. I believe no member of the "learned" faculty of advocates saw so much of James Hogg as I did; also that I was the first who brought him into repute as a welcome guest among what are called the upper classes of society, meaning by such the better and more artificially educated classes; in which purpose of mine the late Lady Williamson (widow of Sir Hedworth) aided me by her dinner parties. On the first of those occasions during dessert, the Shepherd was painfully puzzled, for not having till then met with ice-cream in the shape (as he said) of a "fine het sweet puddin," he took, incautiously, a large spoonful, whereupon with much anxiety and tearful eyes, he appealed to me—"Eh man, d'ye think that Lady Williamson keeps ony whuskey?" to which I replied instantly, that I did not think but was quite certain upon that point; accordingly the butler, at my request, brought him a *petit verre*, by which he was restored to entire comfort and well-being.

Hogg came punctually on the day fixed for his first visit at my house, and found Mr. William Erskine and Mr. Pinkerton in the library. Then

occurred one of those exhibitions of captious temper in which "Pinkie" was apt to indulge, and to which James Hogg led most unwittingly. Playfully, and in the spirit of perfect good humour, the Shepherd rallied me on having such unlimited store of books, insisting that the number of volumes that lay on the table alone, were more than any ordinary man would read in a year; and, finally, demanding whether I thought really that book-learning could be of any use to a veritable poet?

This was like a direct attack on one of "Pinkie's" favourite crotchets, for he maintained that a poet, in order to be deserving of notice, required book-learning most especially, and ought to have all Dante and Petrarch, and countless others, at his fingers' ends, before he presumed to walk alone, as Hogg expressed it, even so far as to compose a single sonnet. The Shepherd's leading crotchet was, that by keeping clear of books, he did very effectually guard against the risk of becoming an imitator. In his own words, he "made sure of perfect originality in his own compositions" (though whether of *novelty* is another question). Pinkerton, on the contrary, opined that Hogg, since he learned to read, had got a little book-learning, of which he had become conceited, believing that there was no need for

any more, and so he tried to nettle him with the hackneyed quotation, "A little learning is a dangerous thing," &c. The Shepherd maintained his ground with imperturbable good humour, having indeed far the best of the argument, while Pinkie became cross and sarcastic, in which mood he remained for some time afterwards. At dinner that day, he must needs introduce, *en passant*, some sneers against religion, thereby exciting instantaneous wrath on the part of good old Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, who gave battle immediately. By ill luck, she made it a point of duty to assume an angry tone, and very soon lost temper utterly, whilst her tormentor, sipping his *œil de perdrix*, was jocose and sardonic. Evidently, the Shepherd was amazed and vexed at this. It argued a want of tact on both sides, not reconcilable to *his* notions of good breeding. The dispute would have grown tiresome, had it not been for the excellent management of my late sister-in-law, Mrs. Arthur Clifford, who strenuously claimed Pinkie's attention on account of a promise he had made of going with her to see the Duke of Hamilton's pictures at Holyrood (though she had no intention of accepting his services). The wicked antiquary saw through the *ruse*, and thankfully acquiesced in changing the subject. With great vivacity, Mrs. Clifford then implored Mrs. Grant to settle some

doubts she had long entertained as to the meaning of a certain passage in "Temora." So the discord was quashed, and when Pinkie had *cottoned* to a bottle of curious old Hermitage, and the Shepherd received materials for brewing his first jug of toddy (after which he volunteered a song), of course all was well, and we spent a jovial evening.

To some readers this notice of a family dinner-party will, no doubt, seem the quintessence of twaddle; yet, according to my notions, this one infinitesimal incident, like the pebble thrown into the lake, producing its endless circles, was the commencement of an epoch. In plainer terms, I think the appearance of the good honest Shepherd in our Edinburgh society, acquired by degrees a marked influence on the tone of that society, and even gave a new impetus to our literature. Numberless were the convivial parties at dinner and supper which, but for him, would never have taken place at all, and but for his quaint originality of manners and inexhaustible store of good songs, would have been comparatively so *fade* and lifeless, that no one would have desired a repetition. Farther, I am thoroughly convinced that his example gave a new impulse to literature. There were individuals who, observing with wonder the facility and pertinacity with which he composed, and the undeniable merit of his productions, be-

came ashamed that, with all their book knowledge, they should allow themselves to be outdone, and cast utterly into shade by an illiterate shepherd, a man also who seemed to give himself no thought nor care about his own works, but to be engaged day after day, or rather night after night, in scraping on the fiddle, singing his own ballads, and, with the help of Glenlivat, making himself and others uproariously merry! In truth, after his appearance, the number of aspirant authors increased wonderfully; and as Hogg insisted that no one deserved the name of poet, whose writings were not perfectly original, so every such aspirant began very resolutely to aim at somewhat entirely new in matter and, if possible, in form. Hogg all the while went his own way, perfectly unconscious and regardless of the influence which he exercised, and for which no one had the civility to thank him. Amongst other effects of his eccentric example, I may notice, that but for his suggestions, although he never in his life could write a page in prose that was fit to be read, Blackwood's far-famed Magazine would probably not have come into existence. The Shepherd was snubbed for saying so in his autobiography, but it was nevertheless true.

In 1813, I published the first edition of "Childe Alarique, a Poet's Reverie;" also a woeful at-

tempt at a prose novel in two volumes. If the former were within my reach, I could perhaps extract from it ten or twelve stanzas, which being animated by vivid and truthful impressions, are not so objectionable as the rest, but it has drifted away irrecoverably. In the summer of that year I resided in Heriot-row, having furnished a house there. Thence, in the beginning of August, I migrated to the north, to give my friend Mr. Pinkerton a promised *rendezvous*, who, meanwhile, tried his footing with Mr. Ferguson of Raith, Mr. Dempster, of Dunnichen and Lord Panmure, by all of whom he was received hospitably, but by none of them encouraged to protract his visit. I need not try back on the three months that he spent *chez moi*, but cannot forget that before he left Edinburgh I became his debtor for my first introduction to John Kemble, which led to an acquaintance that was cordially kept up for succeeding years.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. WORDSWORTH'S VISIT TO EDINBURGH.—HIS CONVERSATION DURING A WALK TO CORSTORPHIN HILL. — HIS VIEWS RESPECTING THE DUTIES INCUMBENT ON THE POETICAL CHARACTER. — LETTERS FROM MR. WORDSWORTH IN THE YEARS 1814,-15,-16,-17.

THE winter of 1813-14 was remarkable for being the severest I have ever known. Soon after my return to Heriot-row, I was attacked by an illness which prescribed remedies in the long run only aggravated. I seldom went out, and was too dispirited to receive any one convivially at home. My only visitor was Mr. Arthur Clifford, who kindly came every day at two or three o'clock, and passed the time till his own dinner hour, in literary conversation. The rigour of that season continued without intermission until the month of March, when suddenly, a "south wind came with the breath of June," which, in a few hours, annihilated all the frost-work. Within three months thereafter, I had migrated to a house in Great King-street, which for twelve years subsequently I regarded as my home; and by that time

(June, 1814) my habits of life were in some respects thoroughly changed. I had become weary of medical treatment, skilful as it might be, therefore disregarded it wholly, trusting rather to means hydropathic and homœopathic, though not then distinguished by these imposing names; also to the "luxury of keeping a horse," by whose help I could at will change the scene from the town's iron bars and stone walls to the green shades of Roslin or Newbattle, or from the heights beyond both, contemplate Edinburgh in its grandeur *à la distance.* Gradually and imperceptibly a little society was formed, who held together by certain conditions, though no resolution thereto was ever proposed or mooted. The prevalent habit was to have daily convivial meetings, for the most part dinner parties, followed always by music, and when circumstances favoured, by a dance.

Already divers times I have regretted the introduction of passages such as the preceding paragraphs; but though the web of egotism may be very coarse and ungainly, it is yet needful sometimes as a basis without which the patchwork of recollections would not hold together.

Out of sight the most memorable event of my life during this year was my first meeting with Mr. Wordsworth, in regard to which I have

special reason to regret being obliged to write in haste, for (repeating an expression used on some former occasion) I may most truly say, that a volume would be more suitable than a few pages to record my recollections of this revered friend, to whose unalterable kindness after the lapse of thirty-four years, I have been deeply indebted. Some remarks which I have already made on certain leading characteristics of pre-eminent genius will apply with redoubled force in the present instance. Frequently in the course of these memoranda, I have been reminded of a remark made to me by another most distinguished friend, Mr. Kenelm H. Digby, namely, that the most laborious and ascetic characters, those in short who are the hardest task-masters of themselves, are invariably the most playful and unaffected in manners and the most disposed to lenity on behalf of others. The remark arose from the example then before us of a celebrated clergyman at Paris, to whom it was very applicable, and during a long-life my experience has assured me of its correctness. Of austere censors the *most* overbearing and *exigeant* are always to be found among pretended moralists and *soi-disant* saints; and of arrogant critics the most uncompromising are those who love their own ease too well to make any exertion which

they can let alone, and who measure all merit by the standard of their own confined intellects, or by the opinion of some precious Mrs. Grundy, to whom they obsequiously defer.

But to return;—among convivial spirits no one could be more joyous than Wordsworth; no one could enter more heartily and readily into the humours of the passing hour; and among eminent authors no one could ever be found more willing than he was to make allowances for the faults of others, or to afford instruction whenever he met with a pupil whose attachment to literature was not founded on vanity or affectation. His own lofty and buoyant spirit very obviously resulted from three causes—1st, natural energy of constitution and character; 2nd, calmness and wisdom, founded on moral principles inflexibly firm; 3rd, of a course of training to him become habitual, namely, the hydropathic (though the name of Priesnitz was not then dreamed of), for he detested wine and other fermented liquors, and every day climbed the mountains, composing his poems, and giving them utterance in the deepest tone of invocation and inspiration as he ascended. Truly it was a laborious and joyous life, and it was needful for him to say: "*labor ipsa voluptas erat*," seeing that our excellent world under the exemplary reigns of Charles the Second and

James the Second, was not more obtuse to the poetical merits of John Milton than our modern world in the enlightened era of George the Fourth, to those of William Wordsworth. In Scotland, as already said, it had been currently believed that our "Edinburgh Review" had for ever demolished his pretensions; and it could only be by a species of *monomania* that he continued travelling up hill in the teeth of those merciless blasts from the cold North! It would, however, be impossible in any words to do justice to the calmness of contempt with which Wordsworth regarded such attacks. In his own words applied to Milton—

"His soul was like a star and dwelt apart."

How completely his genius triumphed at last and established its empire over the public mind "for all time," it would be very needless to say.

My recollection is vivid, of his brief sojourn at Edinburgh, in 1814. I cannot overlook how, on the day of his arrival, I was kindly invited to meet him at dinner, by the late Mrs. Wilson; and having Mr. C. K. Sharpe and another friend already engaged, *chez moi*, it was arranged that they should join the party; and how that other friend (a brother advocate), observing that the poet during dinner did not say much, benevolently thought that he

must patronise him and draw him out, thereby assuming a lead in the conversation; and what sad blunders resulted, and how the poet himself, Mr. Sharpe and the family, with whom we dined, were at length convulsed with laughter: whilst, for my own part, I felt indignant and wrathful at such well-intentioned, but unsuitable demonstrations.

It was kindly agreed that the afternoon and evening of next day should be given to my insignificant self; and by agreement, also, Mr. Wordsworth came at two o'clock, in order to join in my then favourite walk to the top of Corstorphin Hill, whither we were accompanied by Mrs. Wordsworth, Miss Hutchinson, and Mr. James Wilson. Gladly should I record the whole of that day's conversation, of which, however, only the heads or leading drift remain on my mind. It was not difficult to discern that my humble admiration of poets, and preference of literary pursuits, were at least sincere; also, that I had already adopted on these matters certain fixed notions, which were radically wrong;—and this negative qualification was a quite sufficient incentive to Mr. Wordsworth, during a three hours' walk, to expose such errors and illustrate the truth (as in after years by his kind letters he continued to do). In his own words again, as applied to Milton, he could "lay on himself the lowliest duties," and so would try

to enlighten the humblest tyro, provided he found a willing and attentive auditor. Accordingly we carried on an animated debate, which never for an instant flagged. Without presuming to contradict him, I brought forward every example that I thought would bear on my side of the question. I contended for the poet's right to be singular, to feel differently from all the world about him,—to have his own world (with its imaginary beings, no doubt), wherein he should keep aloof and alone,—finally, to make his own peculiar impressions the subject matter of his poetry.

How much of error there was in all this it is very needless to say; nor, perhaps, need I regret my inability to record adequately the zeal and eloquence with which Mr. Wordsworth exposed the fallacies, seeing that his immortal works so amply establish both by example and precept, his views of the poetical character, and its high responsibilities. A great genius is never one-sided;—Mr. Wordsworth with alacrity granted my premisses so far as there was any truth in them. Peculiarity of feelings, morbid weakness, and idiosyncrasy, might all be very pardonable; indeed sometimes (as in the case of Mr. Charles Lloyd) could not be helped; but to stickle for these and industriously make them, as if *par excellence*, into the chosen *matériel* of poetical composition, was the most egregious

blunder that an author could adopt. Cowper (one of my special favourites) was weak and morbid, no doubt, and he could not help this; but he wisely *tried* to help it by looking abroad on nature and society, by endeavouring to do good, and in that pursuit to lose sight of himself. Originality and singularity were not to be regarded as synonymous words. It was, indeed, very possible that any or every author might find in his own constitution a disposition to wayward humours and morbid fancies, might write melodious verses thereon, attract admirers perhaps, and on this questionable *matériel* ring the changes for life long: but though very possible, all this was by no means enviable, nor to be selected as exemplary; on the contrary, the poet's proper duty and the real value of his compositions, depended on principles altogether antagonistic with these. Naturally, and not by constraint, a strong and well-poised mind would put to itself the question, *cui bono?* and in the conception and development of some ennobling and worthy purpose, mere egotism would necessarily be left out of the question; thereby the poet would be led out of himself, and, as above said, would "look abroad upon Nature," seeking in her stores for examples and imagery to bear out his preconceived aims, till idiosyncrasy and selfish cares were (in artist's phrase),

"scumbled" away into the back ground and forgotten.

On this theme, principally, did Mr. Wordsworth continue his eloquent lecture during that afternoon's walk. He had indulgence and clemency for all my favourite authors, but objected immitigably to my conclusions in almost every instance. With Lord Byron he seemed to have least patience; for though cordially admitting his lordship's extraordinary power, and his claims as a man of genius, he yet firmly believed that his application of that power was reprehensible, perverted, and vicious. We spoke, I remember, of countless authors, even the most remote from and incongruous with each other; for example, of Alfieri, and his translator, Charles Lloyd; of Shakspeare's sonnets; of Professor Wilson, who had not then published more than the "Isle of Palms;" of Sir Egerton Brydges; and, lastly, of my almost daily associate, James Hogg, and his "Queen's Wake;" but as my reader would not be much entertained by a long chapter of criticism, I shall not attempt to recapitulate more of the conversation.

With the most heartfelt respect and veneration for their author, I shall here add a few excerpts from the many long and kind letters which I have received from Mr. Wordsworth. I can scarcely hesitate on the question whether this is or is not

taking an undue liberty, because the passages I shall quote tend merely to illustrate and bear out the affirmations I have already made. As evidences of his kindness and condescension to a humble but wayward tyro, as proofs of his high and uncompromising views respecting the duty and responsibility of the poetical character, these extracts, though from letters hastily penned, seem to me worthy of conservation "for all time."

"Rydall Mount, Nov. 23, 1814.

"My dear Sir,—You must have feared that notwithstanding your care, the parcel has not reached its destination; I have, however, the gratification of saying that it arrived punctually at Kendal. I have to thank you, also, for 'Egbert,' which is pleasingly and vigorously written, and proves that with a due sacrifice of exertion, you will be capable of performing things that will have a strong claim on the regards of posterity. But keep, I pray you, to the great models; there is in some parts of this tale, particularly page fourth, too much of a bad writer—Lord Byron; and I will observe that towards the conclusion, the intervention of the peasant is not only unnecessary, but injurious to the tale, inasmuch as it takes away from that species of credibility on

which it rests. I have peeped into the 'Ruminator,' and turned to your first letter, which is well executed, and seizes the attention very agreeably. Your longer poem I have barely looked into: but I promise myself no inconsiderable pleasure in the perusal of this.

"I thank you for the 'Queen's Wake;' since I saw you in Edinburgh I have read it. It does Mr. Hogg great credit. Of the tales, I liked best, much the best, the 'Witch of Fife,' the former part of 'Kilmenie,' and the 'Abbot Mackinnon.' Mr. Hogg, himself, I remember, seemed most partial to 'Mary Scott,' though he thought it too long. For my own part, though I always deem the opinion of an able writer upon his own works entitled to consideration, I cannot agree with Mr. Hogg in this preference. The story of 'Mary Scott' appears to me extremely improbable, and not skilfully conducted; besides, the style of the piece is often vicious. The intermediate parts of the 'Queen's Wake' are done with much spirit, but the style here, also, is often disfigured with false finery, and in too many places it recalls Mr. Scott to one's mind. Mr. Hogg has too much genius to require that support, however respectable in itself. As to style, if I had an opportunity, I should like to converse with you thereupon. Such is your sensibility, and your power of mind,

that I am sure I could induce you to abandon many favourite modes of speech; for example, why should you write, 'Where the lake gleams beneath the *autumn* sun,' instead of 'autumnal,' which is surely more natural and harmonious? We say, 'summer sun,' because we have no adjective termination for that season, but vernal and autumnal are both unexceptionable words. Miss Seward uses 'hybernal,' and I think it is to be regretted that the word is not familiar. But these discussions render a letter extremely dull.

"I sent the alterations of 'Yarrow Visited,' to Miss Hutchinson and my sister, in Wales, who think them great improvements, and are delighted with the poem as it now stands. Second parts, if much inferior to the first, are always disgusting, and as I had succeeded in 'Yarrow Unvisited,' I was anxious that there should be no falling off; but that was unavoidable, perhaps, from the subject, as imagination almost always transcends reality. I remain hoping that you will excuse this most hasty scrawl, with great regard and respect,

"Yours most truly,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

"Rydall Mount, Nov. 12, 1814.

"You are a most indulgent and good-natured critic, or I think you would hardly have been so much pleased with 'Yarrow Visited;' we think it heavier than my things generally are, and nothing but a wish to show to Mr. Hogg that my inclinations towards him and his proposed work were favourable, could have induced me to part with it in that state. I have composed three new stanzas in place of the three first, and another to be inserted before the two last, and have made some alterations in other parts; therefore, when you see Mr. Hogg, beg from me that he will not print the poem till he has read the copy which I have added to Miss E. Wilson's MSS., as I scarcely doubt, notwithstanding the bias of first impressions, that he will prefer it.

"In the same MSS. you will find a sonnet addressed to yourself, which I should have mentioned before, but for a reason of the same kind as kept you silent on the subject of yours. I am not a little concerned that you continue to suffer from morbid feelings, and still more that you regard them as incurable. This is a most delicate subject, and which, perhaps, I ought not to touch at all, considering the slender knowledge which circumstances have yet allowed me of the characteristics of your malady. But this I can confidently say,

that poetry and the poetic spirit will either help you, or harm you, as you use them. If you find in yourself more of the latter effect than of the former, forswear the Muses and apply tooth and nail to law, to mathematics, to mechanics, to any thing, only escape from your insidious foe. But, if you are benefited by your intercourse with the lyre, then give yourself up to it with the enthusiasm which I am sure is natural to you. I should like to be remembered to Mr. Lappenberg, to Mr. Hogg, and our friends in Queen-street, of course. Mr. Sharpe, I hope, does not forget me. Adieu, most faithfully, and with great respect,

"Yours,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

"Rydall Mount, Dec. 22, 1814.

"My dear Sir,—Your account of yourself distresses me. Flee from your present abode. If you resolve on going to London, let me beg of you to take Westmoreland in your way. You can make a trial here, and should it not answer, you are only so far on your way to town. We shall be glad to see you, though I know that my house is too small, and my family far too noisy, for a person whose nerves are out of tune. But there are lodgings in the neighbourhood which might possibly suit you, though their accommodations are not very luxu-

rious. But you remember Horace's invitation to Mæcenas:—

'Plerumque gratæ divitibus vices,
Mundæque parvo sub lare pauperum
Cœnæ, sine aulеis et ostro,
Solicitam explicuêre frontem.'

"Your first position, that every idea which passes through a poet's mind may be made passionate, and therefore poetical, I am not sure that I understand. If you mean through a poet's mind when in a poetical mood, the words are nothing but an identical proposition. But a poet must be subject to a thousand thoughts in common with other men, and many of them must, I suppose, be as unsusceptible of alliance with poetic passion as the thoughts that interest ordinary men. But the range of poetic feeling is far wider than is ordinarily supposed, and the furnishing new proofs of this fact is the only incontestible demonstration of genuine poetic genius. 2dly, 'The moment a clear idea of any kind is conceived, it ought to be brought out directly and rapidly as possible, without any view to any particular style of language.' I am not sure that I comprehend your meaning here. Is it that a man's thoughts should be noted down in prose, or that he should express them in any kind of verse that they most easily fall into? I think it well to make brief memoranda of

our most interesting thoughts in prose; but to write fragments of verse is an embarrassing practice. A similar course answers well in painting, under the name of studies; but in poetry it is apt to betray a writer into awkwardness, and to turn him out of his course for the purpose of lugging on these ready-made pieces by the head and shoulders. Or do you simply mean, that such thoughts as arise in the process of composition should be expressed in the first words that offer themselves, as being likely to be most energetic and natural? If so, this is not a rule to be followed without cautious exceptions. My first expressions I often find detestable; and it is frequently true of second words as of second thoughts, that they are the best. I entirely accord with you in your third observation, that we should be cautious not to waste our lives in dreams of imaginary excellence, for a thousand reasons, and not the least for this, that these notions of excellence may perhaps be erroneous, and then our inability to catch a phantom of no value may prevent us from attempting to seize a precious substance within our reach.

"When your letter arrived, I was in the act of reading to Mrs. Wordsworth your 'Exile,' which pleased me more, I think, than any thing that I have read of yours. There is, indeed, something of 'mystification' about it which does not enhance

its value with me; but it is, I think, in many passages delightfully conceived and expressed. I was particularly charmed with the seventeenth stanza, first part. This is a passage which I shall often repeat to myself; and I assure you that, with the exception of Burns and Cowper, there is very little of recent verse, however much it may interest me, that sticks to my memory (I mean which I get by heart). The recommendation of your volume is, that it is elegant, sensitive, and harmonious,—a rare merit in these days; its defect, that it deals too much in pleasurable and melancholy generalities. But if you preserve your health of body, I am confident you will produce something in verse that will last.

"I have read the 'Ruminator,' and I fear that I do not like it quite so much as you would wish. It wants depth and strength, yet it is pleasingly and elegantly written, and contains everywhere the sentiments of a liberal spirit. Mr. Hogg's 'Badlew' (I suppose it to be his) I could not get through. There are two pretty passages—the flight of the deer, and the falling of the child from the rock of Stirling, though both are a little *outré*. But the story is coarsely conceived, and, in my judgment, as coarsely excuted; the style barbarous, and the versification harsh and uncouth. Mr. Hogg is too illiterate to write in any measure or style that does

not savour of balladism. This is much to be regretted, for he is possessed of no ordinary power.

"I am delighted to learn that your Edinburgh Aristarch has declared against the 'Excursion,' as he will have the mortification of seeing a book enjoy a high reputation, to which he has not contributed. Do not imagine that my principles lead me to condemn Scott's method of pleasing the public, or that I have not a very high respect for his various talents and extensive attainments. I sent him the 'Excursion,' and am rather surprised that I have had no letter from him to acknowledge the receipt of it. Pray, present my regards to him when you see him. I have seen a book advertised under your name, which I suppose to be a novel. How comes it that you do not mention it? I am afraid that my indolence will prevent me from prefixing any prose remarks to my poems. The old preface will be reprinted as an appendix. I have not ventured to place your name *before* the sonnet addressed to you, but I have assigned it a place in the volume.

"With great respect, I remain yours,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

"Rydall Mount, Feb. 17, 1815.

"My dear Sir,—Your very acceptable favour of the 17th was well entitled to a speedier answer,

and the poem of 'Albert,' which I received at the same time, to earlier notice. But I have been pestered for some weeks past with a number of trifles which did not leave me at sufficient leisure to take up the pen with that complacency which I should wish to feel on such an occasion. Nevertheless, if I had not thought that a holiday would have come sooner, I should not have remained silent so long. One of my engagements has been the writing of an additional preface and a supplementary essay to my poems. I have ordered Longman to send the book to you as soon as printed, which I hope will be in a fortnight at latest; and I cannot but flatter myself that you will read it with pleasure. You will find a few hits at certain celebrated names of Scotland, I do not mean persons now living, which may give great offence; yet not much, I think, to you. But let me turn from my own to your productions; and first to the poem. The lines which I liked best, I think, were (2d and 3d pages) from 'I prayed for madness' to 'and even that image faded on my mind,' and page 12, 'Blamest thou,' &c. to 'human voice' inclusive. I fear that towards the conclusion you attribute more influence to nature and to poetry than they can justly claim. The style of 'Albert' is spirited; but the poem has the same defect as the other, in turning so much

upon internal feelings, and those of a peculiar kind, without a sufficiency of incident or imagery to substantiate them.—We now understand each other with respect to the positions of your former letter, and there remains, I think, no difference of opinion between us upon the subject. But I confess, if there is to be an error in style, I much prefer the classical model of Dr. Beattie to the insupportable slovenliness and neglect of syntax and grammar by which Hogg's writings are disfigured.

Impute it to any thing but the wish to say agreeable things for the sake of saying them, when I tell you that the harmony of your verses in the 'Varia,' in particular, does, in my estimation, entitle you to no mean praise, especially when it is considered what a hobbling pace the Scottish Pegasus seems to have adopted in these days. You advert in your notes to certain stores of Highland character, incident, and manners, which have been but slightly touched upon. Would it not be well to collect these as materials for a poetic story, which, if you would set yourself to work in good earnest, I am confident you could execute with effect? Let me recommend this to you, or to compose a romance founded on some one of the many works of this kind that exist, as Wieland has done in his 'Oberon;' not that I should advise such

a subject as he has chosen. You have an ear, and you have a command of diction, a fluency of style, and I wish, as your friend, that you would engage in some literary labour that would carry you out of yourself, and be the means of delighting the well-judging part of the world. In what I said upon the setting down thoughts in prose, I only meant briefly as memoranda to prevent their being lost. It is unaccountable to me how men could ever proceed as Racine (and Alfieri, I believe) used to do, first writing their plays in prose, and afterwards turning them into verse. It may answer with so slavish a language and so enslaved a taste as the French have, but with us it is not to be thought of.

"Mr. Wilson has probably reached Edinburgh by this time; for ourselves, we have not seen him for many months except when Mrs. Wordsworth and I called at his house. To use a college phrase, he seems to have *cut* us. Let me know if you continue in the mind of trying the effect of Westmoreland air upon your spirits. Mr. Wilson has a charming little cottage at Elleray, which, perhaps, he is not likely to make use of; but this you would find very lonely, and it is several miles distant from us. I fear there would be some difficulty in getting lodgings that would suit you; but the trial must be made. The country is at

present charming, the first spring flowers peeping forth in the gardens wonderfully.

"I hope that you continue to like the 'Excursion.' I hear good news of it from many quarters. But its progress to general notice must be slow.

Have you read Lucien Bonaparte's epic? I attempted it, but gave in at the sixth canto, being pressed for time. I shall, however, resume the labour if opportunity offers. But the three first stanzas convinced me that the author was no poet. Farewell! Miss Hutchinson is still in Wales. Mrs. Wordsworth begs her best regards.

"Faithfully yours,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

"Rydall Mount, April 25, 1815.

"My dear Sir,—I think of starting for London in a few days with Mrs. Wordsworth, and as I wish to leave home with as clear a conscience as I can, I sit down to atone for one of my offences in not having replied sooner to your kind letter. Your health, I hope, is better, and if it be much improved, what should prevent you from taking a trip as far south as we think of going, and meeting us in town? We shall be in lodgings somewhere at the west-end, and may easily be heard of, if you should come, by inquiries at Sir

George Beaumont's, corner of North Audley-street, Grosvenor-square.

"You ought to have received my two volumes of poems long before this, if Longman has done his duty. I ordered a copy likewise to be sent to Walter Scott. I cannot but flatter myself that this publication will interest you. The pains which I have bestowed on the composition can never be known but to myself, and I am very sorry to find, on reviewing the work, that the labour has been able to do so little for it. You mentioned 'Guy Mannering' in your last. I have read it. I cannot say that I was disappointed, for there is very considerable talent displayed in the performance, and much of that sort of knowledge with which the author's mind is so richly stored. But the adventures I think not well chosen or invented, and they are still worse put together; and the characters, with the exception of Meg Merrilies, excite little interest. In the management of this lady, the author has shown very considerable ability, but with that want of taste, which is universal among modern novels of the Radcliffe school, which as far as they are concerned, this is. I allude to the laborious manner in which everything is placed before your eyes for the production of picturesque effect. The reader, in good narration, feels that pictures rise up before his

sight, and pass away from it unostentatiously, succeeding each other. But when they are fixed upon an easel for the express purpose of being admired, the judicious are apt to take offence, and even to turn sulky at the exhibitor's officiousness. But these novels are likely to be much over-rated on their first appearance, and will afterwards be as much undervalued. 'Waverley' heightened my opinion of Scott's talents very considerably, and if 'Mannering' has not added much, it has not taken much away. Infinitely the best part of 'Waverley' is the pictures of Highland manners at Mac Ivor's castle, and the delineation of his character, which are done with great spirit. The Scotch Baron and all the circumstances in which he is exhibited are too peculiar and *outré*. Such caricatures require a higher condiment of humour to give them a relish than the author of 'Waverley' possesses. But, too much of this gossip. I heard casually the other day that Mr. Mackenzie might take up his residence in our neighbourhood during some part of the approaching summer. I am sorry for the occasion, which I am told is the delicate health of one of his daughters. Houses and lodgings might be had hereabouts if applied for early in the season, otherwise are difficult to find. I mention this in order that if you happen to see Mr. Mackenzie,

you may repeat it to him, and add that I should be happy to be of service to him on this occasion. My sister will continue at Rydall Mount during Mrs. Wordsworth's and my absence: and if Mr. Mackenzie has no friend in these parts to whom he can apply, she would be happy to transmit to him any information that she thought likely to be useful.

"Excuse this dull and hasty letter, and believe me, "Most sincerely, yours,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

"Rydall Mount, April 9, 1816.

"My dear Sir,—Your obliging present reached me yesterday, several hours before the post brought me your letter. I read the volume through immediately, and paid particular attention to the parts that were new to me. I need not say, that I found much that gave me considerable pleasure; nevertheless, as your preface encourages me to speak with sincerity, I shall act unjustly both to you and myself, if I do not frankly state to you that these compositions, while they possess the same beauties as those which I have formerly seen of yours, labour also under the same defects in full as great a degree. Your mind does not look sufficiently out of itself, and it is impossible that you should do justice to your genius, till you have

acquired more command over the current of your somewhat morbid sensibilities. I trust that you will not be hurt at my speaking thus without reserve. What would it avail to be insincere? Besides, you are thoroughly aware of your own infirmity, and what I say, if objectionable, must mainly be so on account of being superfluous. Your friends will value this little volume. I assure you that I value it much, and should prize it still more, were I assured that it would not be given to the public to be trampled under foot by every bestial hoof that it may happen to encounter. I mean to express a wish that its circulation should be confined to those, who being capable of feeling its merits will also understand the true quality of its imperfections. As I have before said, the constitutional disease of your poetry is want of variety. I find, therefore, some difficulty which has most pleased or displeased me. Of the tales, I shall not repeat what I said heretofore. The same praise and censure apply to the new which I presumed to give to the old. The sonnets are more or less agreeable, separately considered, but they stand in each other's way from not being sufficiently diversified. I think I was most pleased with the twenty-seventh, but I could easily point out many that I liked. Nevertheless, as a friend and a critic, I

recommend that the work should not be published; though I shall not be in the slightest degree hurt on my own account as to the point of self-love, if yourself and your other friends should think otherwise.

"I am glad to hear so good an account of Mr. Wilson's poem, nor has it yet found its way to us; nor have I heard of it, except from a lady, a neighbour of ours, now in Edinburgh, who wrote to her husband that she has been delighted with it. But Mr. Wilson knows that ladies for the most part are very sorry critics, and the person in question is, perhaps, not an exception, though I have no doubt that in this case she is in the right, knowing Mr. Wilson's genius; and hearing from you that he has done so well. Mr. De Quincey has taken a fit of solitude; I have scarcely seen him since Mr. Wilson left us. You are very obliging in having taken so much trouble about so slight a thing as the sonnet of mine you sent me. It is not worth while to tell you by what circuitous channel it found its way into the 'Examiner,' a journal which I never see, though I have great respect for the talent of its editor. In the 'Champion,' another weekly journal, have appeared not long since five sonnets of mine, all of which much superior to the one which you have sent me. They will form part of a publication which I sent

to the press three weeks ago, which you have been given to understand was a long work, but it is in fact very short, not more than seven hundred verses altogether. The principal poem is three hundred lines long, a Thanksgiving Ode, and the others refer almost exclusively to recent public events. The whole may be regarded as a sequel to the sonnets dedicated to liberty, and accordingly I have given directions for its being printed uniform with my poems to admit of its being bound up also with them. I have also sent to press a letter in prose, occasioned by an intended republication of Dr. Currie's 'Life of Burns.' When these little things will be permitted to see the light I know not; and as the publisher has not even condescended to acknowledge the receipt of the manuscripts, which were sent three weeks ago, from this you may judge of the value which the goods of the author of the 'Excursion' at present bear in the estimation of the trade. *N'importe;* if we have done well, we shall not miss our reward. Farewell!

"Yours faithfully,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

"Rydall Mount, April 15, 1816.

"* * *.—You will excuse my acknowledging your kind attention so early, but really I am afraid of my own habits of procrastination; and should I not write now, I might put off the act, till having become disagreeable in thought by reminding me of my own infirmities, it might be performed so late as to rob it of every grace and all merit. The last post but one brought me your letter, and this morning's coach the little tract containing Sir E. Brydge's Essay. First, let me correct an error Mr. Wilson has led you into: I never saw Sir E. Brydges but once; it was at dinner, but in so large a party that I had scarcely any conversation with him; and, to the best of my recollection, he said little. The fault of the Essay in question is not that the opinions in general are erroneous, but that they are brought forward in a loose straggling manner. There is no necessary succession in the thoughts—no development from a seminal principle. Sir Egerton is quite right in stating that 'no poetry can be good without animation;' but when he adds that 'the position will almost exclude whatever is very highly and artificially laboured, he thinks laxly and uses words inconsiderately. Substitute for the word 'artificially,' the word 'artfully,' and you will at once see that

nothing can be more erroneous than the assertion. The word 'artificially' begs the question, because that word is always employed in an unfavourable sense. Gray failed as a poet, not because he took too much pains, and so extinguished his animation, but because he had very little of that fiery quality to begin with, and his pains were of the wrong sort. He wrote English verses as his brother Eton school-boys wrote Latin, filching a phrase now from one author and now from another. I do not profess to be a person of very various reading; nevertheless, if I were to pluck out of Gray's tail all the feathers which I know belong to other birds, he would be left very bare indeed. Do not let anybody persuade you that any quantity of good verses can be produced by mere felicity; or that an immortal style can be the growth of mere genius. 'Multa tulit fecitque' must be the motto of all those who are to last. There are poems now existing which all the world ran after at their first appearance, and it will continue to run after their like, that do not deserve to be thought of as literary works, everything in them being skin-deep merely as to thought and feeling, the juncture or suture of the composition not being a jot more cunning or more fitted for endurance than the first fastening together of fig-leaves in Paradise. But I need not press upon you the

necessity of labour, as you have avowed your conviction upon this subject. I assure you that if I had not had a very high opinion both of your head and heart, I should not have ventured to dissuade you from publishing at a time when I was upon the point of committing that act myself. I felt that my situation would have been very awkward had I acted in that manner towards a person less deserving than yourself. I shall give you my opinion of your MS. with the same freedom I have hitherto used, if you should resolve upon sending it. Pray remember me to the Wilsons most kindly. When does Mr. Wilson return to Westmoreland? I have not yet seen his 'City of the Plague;' the more the pity, for I quarrel with the title. Tell Mr. Wilson this from me, and repeat the two following quotations:—

'But whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which nature
Furnishes for every creature;'

and this,—

'Cock-a-doodle-doo,
My dame has lost her shoe;
My master's lost his fiddlestick,
And knows not what to do!'

Farewell, with great regard and esteem, Yours,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

"Rydall Mount, Nov. 16, 1816.

"My dear Sir, — I am much obliged for the trouble you have taken respecting Mr. Jameson's ineffectual application to Messrs. Longman for the letter to Mr. Gray. I hope that Mr. Jameson will be supplied in a few days with one hundred copies, as I wrote some little time ago to the publisher requesting him to send that number. It is my wish that this letter should be circulated in Scotland, and I should deem myself under obligation to any friend who will exert himself in making it known. The novels of Sir Egerton Brydges I have not yet found time to look into; but your poem I have read with considerable attention. The 'Visionary' contains many good lines and well-written passages, for example, 'the never-dying leaves of ivy bright,' — 'Fly when pursued, and when obtained expire.' The latter half of page 53 is finely conceived and expressed. So are many other passages, as in page 30, 'Long was the way, and led o'er trackless heath;' but you are probably aware that the poem, as a whole, is objectionable — upon the same grounds as the other tales. It wants substance, and is rendered puzzling in the conduct by the succession of persons not sufficiently discriminated from each other in character or situation, and who engage in no

course of action. So that upon the whole I cannot say that I think this piece superior to its predecessors, and in point of versification I think it inferior. Your rhyme has in general more harmony than your blank verse, which latter might in many instances be improved with little trouble. For example, at the top of page 100 are three lines, each having its pause on the sixth syllable. Read the second line thus: 'renews his wonted carol; stillness reigns,' and the sound will be improved without injury to the sense. You frequently introduce pauses at the second syllable, which are always harsh, unless the sense justify them and require an especial emphasis; but in such cases as the following observe their bad effect, page 21, 'the race;—the game of dice.'

I am sorry you should have been rendered uneasy by charges of plagiarism brought against you by your friends. I cannot deny that I have been frequently reminded of what I have written by your verses, but never under any circumstances which led me to any reflection discreditable to your ingenuousness of mind. The resemblances are such as you probably are for the most part wholly unconscious of, and were it otherwise, I do not see that they can be reckoned otherwise than as an indirect compliment to the original author. I therefore entreat of you, so far as I

am concerned, to dismiss the matter wholly from your thoughts. Your poems are sufficiently original, and tinctured enough, perhaps too exclusively, from your own mind. I cannot conclude without noticing the introductory poem to your tales. It is written with much liveliness, and, I think, furnishes good ground for expectation that you will succeed when you look out of yourself. Of most of the other poems you have heard my sentiments before. Both 'Lucia' and 'Montalban' contain agreeable stanzas, but as wholes they are too deficient in substance. My penmanship is so bad, that in mercy I ought to conclude. If you write more blank verse, pray pay particular attention to your versification, especially as to the pauses on the first, second, third, eighth, and ninth syllables. These pauses should never be introduced for convenience, and not often for the sake of variety merely, but for some especial effect of harmony or emphasis. Mrs. Wordsworth and Miss Hutchinson are both well, and join in kindest regards. I remain, with great respect,

"Most truly yours,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

"Rydall Mount (date wanting), 1817.

"My dear Sir,—I am unworthy of the many acts of kind attention you bestow on me. I know

nothing of the treatise of Wieland, which you inquired after, or I should have written immediately on receipt of your letter. But as I was absent when it arrived, and you must consequently have incurred some disappointment, without any fault of mine, I was foolish enough to press that circumstance into the service of my procrastinating habits. I have read your poem. I like it better than any of the preceding ones. There is a strong family resemblance, no doubt, in them all, but this, on the whole, is to me the most interesting. It is natural throughout and contains many pleasing passages, though I know that in the merit of particular parts, some of the others are equal, and perhaps superior to it. But the general impression of this last is to my mind much more agreeable than any of the preceding ones. Oswald's feelings, on learning that his first passion was hopeless, are given in an animated style, and his recovery,

"'Even in an hour of sun-illumined rain,'

is very fine; but observe, that here are eight lines all rhyming in the vowel A, which gives a heaviness to the movement of this paragraph, which every reader will feel without being aware of the cause. Lady Clara's character is very well described, and one is pleased to meet such a couplet

as this. It is a sort of beauty that seems natural to you:—

"'All through the copsewood, winding walks there were,
That led to many a natural parterre.'

"But how could you write: 'at every step the scenery seemed improving?" This is a thoroughly bad verse; bad even for prose. The apology for Oswald's second passion, in the preceding canto, is well done. The six lines at the top of page 71 are excellent composition; the sentiment is natural to the character. Is there anything like this in Lord Byron's poems? The language is better than his, for the most part, appears to be, but the sentiment appears somewhat in his style. I could enumerate many couplets and passages that particularly pleased me; for example, in the 36th page, "Spring-tide came on," &c., and the six succeeding ones particularly.

"'And long sweet evenings were, when mellow dyes
Of twilight lingered in the western skies.'

Your essay is desultory enough. Of the soundness of the opinions it becomes me not to judge. The famous passage on Solitude, which you quote from Lord Byron, does not deserve the notice which has been bestowed on it. As composition it is bad, particularly the line—

"'Minions of grandeur shrinking from distress,'

is foisted in for the sake of the rhyme. But the sentiment by being expressed in an antithetic manner is taken out of the region of high and imaginative feeling to be placed in that of point and epigram. To illustrate my meaning, and for no other purpose, I refer to my own lines on the Wye, where you will find the same sentiment, not formally put as it is here, but ejaculated as it were fortuitously in the musical succession of preconceived feeling. Compare the paragraph ending,

"'How often has my spirit turn'd to thee,'

and the one where occur the lines:—

"'And greetings where no kindness is, and all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,'

with these lines of Lord Byron, and you will perceive the difference. You will give me credit for writing for the sake of truth, and not for so disgusting a motive as self-commendation at the expense of a man of genius. Indeed, if I had not known you so well, I would rather have suppressed the truth than incurred the risk of such an imputation. At page 20, you say—

"'My rustic lyre I cast away, unable to *pourtray*.'

We do not pourtray with a lyre but with a pencil. You frequently use 'revive again;' this is tautology. * * * * You hold out hope that

you will visit this country. Do not disappoint us; and if Mrs. Gillies comes with you so much the better. Farewell! Best regards from Mrs. Wordsworth and Miss Hutchinson, and believe me, my dear sir, with many thanks for your kind attentions, "Most faithfully yours,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

Subjoined is the beautiful sonnet which has been more than once alluded to in the foregoing letters, and which I do not transcribe without some hesitation, though, for reasons similar to those assigned in page 86, respecting the commendations of another friend, I may possibly be excused for so doing.

From the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning th' unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, GILLIES, rise: the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a wingèd steed.—
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And Reason govern that audacious flight,
Which heaven-ward they direct. Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow,
In the low dell, mid Roslin's faded grove:
A cheerful life is what the muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.*

* Poetical Works, vol. ii. p. 280. Moxon, 1849.

CHAPTER VIII.

RECOLLECTIONS OF DR. THOMAS BROWNE.—THE BEST AUTHORS ARE USUALLY INDULGENT CRITICS.—MR. HENRY MACKENZIE.—THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD AND THE "POETIC MIRROR."—MR. CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE.—MR. JAMES WILSON.—THE "RAID OF ROSLYN."—THE "RIGHT, WRONG OR RIGHT CLUB."

I WROTE nearly 150 pages on recollections of the year 1794. I might elaborate as many respecting this year, 1814, but shall not do so. The society who were then kind enough to honour me with their visits at Edinburgh, were so constant in their attentions, that I had no time for retirement into the country. Besides, the house in which I resided could not properly be called a *town*-house. It was the only inhabited domicile in a new street then in progress, and from its rear we had a free and beautiful prospect over fields and woods, across the Frith of Forth, and away into the far Highlands, where, at thirty-five miles' distance, a practised eye could identify the grey peaks of Benvoirlich and Benvenue. I have said that my habits of life had changed, and it is true the afternoons and evenings were almost inva-

riably given up to society, but I had all the long mornings for uninterrupted study, and could also make long excursions into the country. If I did not leave Edinburgh as usual for Kincardineshire, it was only because I reserved the power to do so, in order to exercise it with more pleasure. I never once reflected that the trifling transaction already recorded, of the year 1811, had not been undone, nor was likely to be so, and that instead of writing lugubrious verses all morning, and arranging convivial parties for every evening, it would have been wiser to devote attention to making up a strong purse against the day of reckoning. On the contrary, before that year was out, I found it expedient to appoint trustees, and to inflict a farther burden on the lands, namely, for the inconsiderable sum of £2,000, this being the *first* and the *last* mortgage I ever granted on that hereditary property on my own account and for personal purposes. My old ally, Mr. Pinkerton, as already observed, had shrewd notions about pecuniary matters, and probably guessed how my involvements were likely to terminate. He wrote to me several times from London, dilating on the advantages to be derived from a visit to the metropolis, if made under his particular auspices and direction. More especially he opined that the best way of dealing with hereditary acres was to

convert them forthwith into hard cash, he pledging himself to find a safe and profitable investment for the reversion money, and insisting that Hampstead Heath was, for a literary man, a place of retirement, infinitely preferable either to the heath of the Grampian hills or the sheltered valleys of the Kincardineshire lowlands. In return for all his kindness I sent him a very indignant sonnet, and so the correspondence dropped.

Among the literary friends who honoured me with confidence or kind condescension at that time, the late Professor Thomas Browne holds a distinguished place in my remembrance. The world, I believe, recognises him only as a metaphysician, but with the most perfect decision of character as a laborious and indefatigable student, he had versatility of talents such as have rarely been equalled. At this time Dr. Browne held the very responsible situation of Dugald Stewart's chosen representative and successor, and consequently was every day occupied less or more in improving those popular lectures which, since his death, have gone through seventeen editions, and immortalized his name. But instead of adhering to this employment alone their author might, to a superficial observer, have seemed quite sufficiently occupied with the pursuits of poetry and romance, and (as he did not shun the social circles)

with conviviality. Like President Blair, Henry Mackenzie, and Henry Erskine, he never lost his juvenile interest for even the lightest literature of the day, not rejecting even *mediocre* novels and poems, provided they were not altogether stupid, but looking upon them as useful in their degree, and contributing advantageously to a great whole. Dr. Browne published volume after volume of his own original poetry in a great variety of styles, but (excepting two volumes in 1804) always anonymously, nor would he acknowledge the paternity in conversation, but if they were mentioned, forthwith changed the subject. As he resolutely denied himself any personal repute for these productions, it may be naturally supposed that, like St. Chrysostom, he wrote in verse, "because it was more difficult than prose." In truth, he delighted in grappling with literary difficulties, which seemed to dissolve utterly before his quiet resolution and imperturbable amenity of temper. How often during our afternoon walks in vacation time, have I heard from him such expressions as the following: "More than half the difficulties in this world are of our own making; you imagine them to be far greater than they are. It is like as if a child held out a drawn sword, and a foolish giant ran right against it, instead of waving it gently aside."

Among Dr. Browne's minor poems were occasionally passages of great beauty. I remember one (though I cannot repeat it) addressed "To a Withered Leaf," which I treasured for many a year; but like thousands of other literary leaves, it is beyond my reach now, and I do not know that it was included in any of his printed volumes. On his lectures, luckily, no comments of mine are needed, for since that era in my own life, when metaphysics became my favourite study, the book, like his treatise on "Cause and Effect," has never fallen in my way. But I feel very sure, that if, instead of studying in the school of Dugald Stewart (much as he differed from him) Browne had given his attention fairly and sufficiently to the works of Immanuel Kant, he could have conquered their difficulties and rendered justice to an author, who, up to the present hour, in his own country and elsewhere (even by his admirers) has been so woefully misrepresented. Doctor Browne was a most valuable and stedfast friend, ever willing to prescribe benevolently for infirmities, either of mind or body, and if he detected good points in any character, he weighed them scrupulously, and would not easily be shaken by defects or aberrations. I have repeatedly said that the utter absence of affectation or pretence of any kind is a distinguishing mark of real genius, and it is not

likely that I shall ever withdraw that assertion. In convivial circles, however, and for ordinary observers, Dr. Browne's demeanour and conversation were for ordinary observers deceptive, though without the remotest intention on his own part to deceive. The contrast betwixt those pale study-worn features, and his playful gaiety of manners was indeed very striking, and under the disguise of the latter, a stranger would not easily detect the deeply-reflecting metaphysician or the deeply-feeling poet. But I do not allow that in this there was one particle of affectation. It indicated merely a duality of the phasis of action. His proper sphere as a philosopher was in his own retired study (a gloomy back-room of a *rez de chaussée*, in Prince's-street); but he moved in society unscathed, assuming, of course, a manner for the occasion, in which, properly speaking, there was no affectation. One might quite as well have accused John Kemble of pretence and affectation if, for some reason or another, he had taken it into his head to act *Tony Lumpkin!*

There are other propositions which I have insisted on more than once in the course of these very hasty records. One was, that where a love of literature has been decided in youth, it will be manifested, despite of uncongenial circumstances, even to extreme old age. Assuredly, no faith can

be placed in the literary character as founded on academical exercises, or other early productions, which are got up *pour briller*, and in the worldly spirit of emulation. The so-called genius needed for such compositions is like a forced plant, which, as soon as the artificial heat has been withdrawn, will wither. Another aphorism which I have recently dwelt upon is, that the most enlarged and enlightened intellect is ever the most indulgent and condescending towards lowly aspirants and *tyrones*. Your "one-sided" critic, subservient to Mrs. Grundy, is always a contemptuous and bitter censor, his principal object of approbation and admiration being himself. On the contrary, the self-disciplinarian of whom it can be said, "*multa tulit fecitque*," is ever willing to discover merits in others when such can possibly be found, and to temper justice with clemency.

In support of these affirmations, we never had any example more distinguished or more universally esteemed than Henry Mackenzie, whom I should have named before, had it not been for conscious inability to do justice to my own feelings of respect for his memory. The first time I met him was at a jovial dinner-party, in 1810. During the next three years, before I settled in Great King-street, where he not unfrequently honoured me with kind visits, I used to look on the

venerable "Man of Feeling" with an indefinable sentiment of awe and wonder. As he used much exercise, I had the luck to meet him often in the streets; occasionally, too, he looked in at John Ballantyne's, where he was received with profound respect and obeisance, as befitted the stedfast friend of Scott, and the patriarch of our northern literature.

No weather daunted him. During squalls, not uncommon at Edinburgh, such as I would not *willingly* have encountered, I have observed him both early and late (often attended by a favourite pointer) drifting along with the tempest, or tottering beneath its attacks, yet by inflexible resolution bidding defiance to both wind and rain. Considering his advanced age, his attenuated form, wrapped in a long, dark *surtout*, which always seemed too wide, as if only a skeleton were under it, and his countenance, then worn away and sharpened, like that of Voltaire in his very last days, and yet capable at all times of the most animated expression, he appeared to me in the same light as Goethe afterwards did in the year 1821; that is to say, he was like a *revenant* from another epoch, at which time *our* world was not in being. After better acquaintance, and not till then, did I become convinced that the title of *revenant*, in its French meaning of *ghost*, could only have

been applied to him by a very absurd blunder, seeing that our authenticated visitors under that name have almost invariably turned out to be very stupid, wayward, and unprofitable affixes to society, whereas Mackenzie did most cordially contribute to the well-being and improvement of our present world, and although he had seen more than three score and ten winters, could participate in its goings-on as cheerfully as he did in those of society fifty years ago.

Mackenzie affords me an illustrious example in support of another favourite aphorism, namely, that men of real genius are always the most simple and unaffected in manners. Some readers will look upon this as no better than a *truism*; others may dispute it, and bring examples to the contrary, which I am very sure would, upon due examination turn out fallacious.

The "Man of Feeling" did not exactly keep the table in a roar with quaint old stories, like Sir Walter Scott, but I have known him do nearly the same thing, and he was quite as much a foe to *starch* or pretension, as the "Great Unknown" or any body else could be. There was one special characteristic of his table-talk which dwells in my remembrance, namely, the aptitude and inexhaustible store of his references to Shakspeare. If the whole of Ayscough's laborious "Concordance"

had been engraven on the tablets of his mind, he could not have been better prepared than he was with appropriate quotations for every occasion. By one lucky trait revived from *Falstaff*, I have known him give not only new zest to the *Château Margout*, but a new and genial tone to the conversation of an entire evening.

Mr. Mackenzie, it is true, had ceased to write, or at least to publish, books, but his interest in literature never abated. When the first sheets of "Waverley" were given to the printer, it was supposed to be the work of an author not merely nameless by choice, but hitherto unknown; and the wise publisher doubted whether he should venture to take off even one thousand copies of such a thing! In order to forward matters, James Ballantyne entrusted the opening chapters to a few literary friends, whose judgment, he thought, was rather more to be relied on than that of any bookseller. I remember with what fervent zeal the patriarchal critic hurried and drifted along the streets at his fleetest pace, to express his conviction that this would turn out to be no ordinary novel, and, whatsoever the publisher might think, was "not the work of any ordinary man." Mackenzie was indeed always ready to manifest his activity, and interpose his influence, where good could be done in any shape or way. One of the last interviews I

had with him was, when he desired my humble co-operation in mustering pupils for a foreign lady of noble birth and excellent talents, who had come to Edinburgh with her husband and family, in order to live there by teaching languages, in which purpose she afterwards fully succeeded.

In proof of his good-will and indulgence towards the wayward aspirants and *tyrones* of literature, I have probably said enough, by merely indicating his condescending kindness towards myself. There could not be any more decided instance of his lenity. I shall only add that, like Dugald Stewart, and others whom I have already named, he showed from youth to age a decided predilection for a country life. Moreover, he delighted in field sports; and though forced by his official duties to remain a great part of the year in town, he invariably spent the summer and autumn in the country, where he went out with his gun, and attended by his favourite dogs, even at the age of fourscore.

Towards the month of September that year, Edinburgh, as usual, became deserted. Even the Ettrick Shepherd disappeared for some weeks, having taken a walk across the Border to visit Mr. Wilson at Elleray, in Westmoreland, and to improve his acquaintance with Wordsworth. As it was not entirely suitable for one in the Shepherd's

circumstances to be contented with praise alone, and (with a slight change) to adopt Sir Egerton Brydges' line,

"Careless of gaining *cash* if I deserve,"

he had taken up the notion, from a scrap book which lay on my table, of borrowing an original poem from every author of the day, and publishing the collection on his own account. "Annuals" and "Souvenirs" were not known then; and truly if every poet had composed with as much facility as James Hogg, and thought as little as he did about his productions afterwards, the plan might have been realized. One of the first promises he received was from Lord Byron, who often favoured him with long letters, which Hogg usually lost in a day or two after their arrival. From other quarters, promises or hopes were held out, but in no instance came to fulfilment, except in that of Mr. Wordsworth, whose poem, however, could not be available by itself alone, and was therefore included by the author in his next publication.

This plan being rather inconsistent with Hogg's usual notions of independence, I doubt not he had all along in the back-ground the quizzical plot which he afterwards carried out—namely, that when every brother of the quill failed him, he would keep his own counsel, and would himself quietly

compose a poem for every one of the authors who had made half or whole promises and broken them! Accordingly, he began with Byron, writing the "Guerrilla Chief"—a story in the Spenserian stanza, and followed it by specimens of Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Wilson, and I forget who more, till at last he made up a volume, which was published under the title of the "Poetic Mirror." John Ballantyne, who not only loved a joke, but delighted in mystification, made the most of this notable *jeu d'esprit*, bringing his customers into the dilemma of admitting either that the poems were genuine, or else that James Hogg, having produced the whole alone and unassisted, must be the most wonderful shepherd that ever tended a flock. And he managed so well, that within six weeks, he handed over thirty pounds to the author (far more, I suppose, than he ever gained by the first edition of the "Queen's Wake.")

I cannot forget that the ballad allotted to himself in this volume, namely, "The Gude Grey Catte," was in its own way super-excellent. This, with the "Witch of Fyfe," in the "Queen's Wake," are, according to my humble notions, enough by themselves to immortalise the Shepherd, from whose works a judicious selection, accompanied by a memoir, is surely a *desideratum;* but in our enlightened era he seems nearly forgotten.

From a scene in one or other of these ballads (I forget which of them) Mr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe made an admirable sketch, which accompanied a new edition of the "Queen's Wake" some years afterwards. It is indeed worthy of reiterated remark how the genius of the poet and that of the artist are allied one to the other, and how decidedly the principles of both may exist and be developed under circumstances the most opposite and antagonistic that can be imagined. It would be hardly possible in all the world to find or imagine two characters more dissimilar as regards education and rank than Goethe, the prime minister, and Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. The latter, I am very sure, had never read one line of the "Faust," for he abhorred translations, looking on them as the servile task of a pedantic mind; and if he heard the name of "Goëth," (such was our Athenian pronunciation,) would only have stared in blank amazement. Yet upon one point he not only harmonized with the great German poet, but even excelled him on his own ground, namely, in the machinery, in better words, the grotesque and ludicrous *diablerie* attendant on the "Witch of Fyfe" and the "Gude Grey Catte." And in all Edinburgh surely there could not be found two literary men more utterly dissimilar than Mr. Sharpe, the fastidious Oxonian, seated in his tapestried chamber, stored with an-

cestral reliques, and James Hogg in his den under the North Bridge, with the old broken "Sclate" always before him, the very sight of which made one shudder with remembrances of intricate problems in arithmetic. Yet with hearty enthusiasm did Mr. Sharpe enter into the humours of Hogg's witches; and the design by which he manifested his sympathy is worthy of the artist whose "Queen Elizabeth dancing" was such a favourite with Sir Walter Scott, that, in his own words, he "could laugh as heartily when looking at it after ten years' acquaintance as he did the first day."

If one happens to possess a good house and well-appointed *ménage* in the best part of Edinburgh, I must admit that the notion of going farther into the country for the love of landscape scenery, may be dispensed with. From the year 1815 till 1827, I regarded the modern Athens as my home, and have never seen more beautiful autumns than there. During one season I made it my habit every day before dinner to walk by St. Leonard's to Duddingston Loch, thence to climb right up and athwart Arthur's Seat, and so return home. My next favourite resort was Corstorphin Hill, especially in the spring season, when the first leaves were on the larch trees, and the first *gowans* came out in the sun-shine. Another resort was to Braid Hill, taking the route thereto

across the meadows and Bruntisfield links; and I made light of the walk to and from Roslin and Hawthornden in fine weather. By all this twaddle I mean only that Edinburgh may be a pleasant residence all the year round, even for one who loves the country.

Mr. C. K. Sharpe, who inclined to this opinion, was one of my frequent visitors in 1814. He did not quite approve my long pedestrian excursions, but oftentimes during the golden light of the autumnal sun, we had protracted rambles through the old town; not rambles, exactly speaking, for we went always in quest of houses haunted, where ghosts either had been or might be expected; or to search after the remains of such mansions as had actually been inhabited by the so-called great and powerful in days of lang-syne. I have met with few literary characters, if any, so thoroughly versed as Mr. Sharpe in the history and antiquities of Scotland and England, in which respect he sometimes proved a valuable auxiliary to Scott, by giving him the required evidence *vivâ voce*, and at once; so saving the trouble of opening even a single volume.

It was then, and I suppose is, Mr. Sharpe's peculiar fancy that every object around him (in his own house I mean) should remind of past ages, and of those only. His favourite room was

fitted up with tapestry in the style of the sixteenth century, leaving, however, one compartment for miniature paintings, each of which had its appropriate legend. The chairs, the tables, and every article on the latter were in keeping. The last visiting cards, the last letters arrived by post, or last notes of invitation to dinner were not to be seen. Any missives, or other manuscripts, mixed with the antique pocket-books and snuff-boxes had all been traced by fingers long since mouldering in the grave. His own handwriting was like an autograph from the days of George Buchanan. With these appliances, and his very sincere love of legendary lore, Mr. Sharpe's own views were very peculiar. At all times he delighted most in the ludicrous, the grotesque, and sarcastic, seemingly his leading drift was to prove how completely the world was made up of ridiculous humbug in former ages, also that radically speaking it was not one jot better now. But of course he could move with more alacrity and freedom on the former tack than the latter, and his conversation afforded an infinite fund of entertainment, portrait succeeding to portrait, the quaintest revivals from the *soumités* of society, long past away into the realm of shadows. To one who wished to banish cares and escape from himself, Mr. Sharpe was consequently an inestimable companion, and as

such, he has my gratitude for many cheerful hours. I felt glad that in the course of that year I could present to him an original portrait of an ancestress which he much valued, namely, that of a certain Countess of Eglintoun, painted by our Scottish Vandyke, Gawin Hamilton.

Perversely enough in regard to this year, 1814, because my store of remembrances is too ample, I feel indisposed to write at all. The store would more than suffice to fill a volume. I cannot possibly be allowed time to write it at present, and after a few more hasty pages must hurry on to another epoch. I have said that a little society had been formed, which held together on the very pleasant principle of daily meetings at dinner followed by music and a dance. In the month of October we began to muster our forces for the winter. The Shepherd had returned from his excursion to the lakes, and his presence was considered indispensable at all our meetings. I neglected my favourite steed, as there was more amusement during the afternoons in pedestrian rambles with two or three friends who did not keep horses. These excursions occasionally turned towards Roslin, and my stedfast friend, Mr. James Wilson, may, perhaps, remember as I do, one beautiful October day at the close of which, moonlight surprised us on the way thence

to Lasswade, as we had lingered too long at Hawthornden—

> " Where Jonson sat in Drummond's classic shade."

Possibly, too, he may recall somewhat of the conversation at the village inn after dinner, in which originated what we then considered a " right merrie jeste," which, as such, has now little but its antiquity to recommend it, but which I notice for other reasons. To wit, it was resolved betwixt Mr. Wilson, Mr. Stanton, and myself, that, with the help of Mr. Bannatyne Macleod, the laird of Maclachlan, and some others, we should, before that moonlight waned, repair to Roslin Chapel in the dead of night, raise the pavement, and bring away one of the thirty coats of armour which lie buried there.

> " There are thirty of Roslin's barons bold
> Lie buried within that proud chapelle ;"

and it is recorded that each body was buried in armour. The questions whether it would be quite seemly and fitting to violate a sanctuary which age rendered so venerable, or whether by this time every coat of mail was not converted into mere rust, were excluded from our deliberations.

Some days afterwards, ere the moon had begun to wane, we met again at my house in town, when at dinner were present the Rev. Dr. Jameson, Mr.

Thomas Thomson, Sir John Grahame Dalyell, and other friends, when the plan was revived, all its details fixed, and an evening appointed for the excursion, each man undertaking to provide himself with proper implements, not forgetting a "pocket pistol," loaded with Glenlivat or Schiedam. It is scarcely needful to add that my learned friends above-named, though they condescended to laugh with (or at) us, did not promise to join the party. At the appointed time, however, the forces having mustered as usual, no man could exclaim, "It is the mune, I ken her horn," for unluckily a south wind had set in, with torrents of rain; so the plot was abandoned.

Malgré an anticipation that this anecdote will be deemed the quintessence of twaddle, I shall follow it up with two more connected therewith, which, according to my notions, are not so insignificant. The Rev. Dr. Jameson, though now-a-days only remembered by his dictionary of the Scottish language, had written or edited a world of books, had been a laborious writer even from his earliest years, and survived many severe fits of illness, brought on by unremitting application. Three days after the dinner party above mentioned, the good old Doctor presented me with a long ballad, in four "fyttes," beautifully written, and entitled

the "Raid of Roslin," of which I cannot recall more than the first two lines—

> "The gallants laughed and the red wine quaffed,
> (Of olden times the tale)."

Foreseeing, as he well might, that the menaced raid would not take place, the author had nevertheless chosen to imagine that it had actually been attempted, and with much liveliness and humour contrived to versify a series of incidents from the birth of the plot to its close—the said close being effected by means of an evil tongue that blabbed, and a party of dragoons from Piershill barracks, who were sent to protect the chapel, and capture the marauders. I thought at the time, and think still, that this ballad afforded a notable instance of good nature, vivacity, and *bonhommie*, in an antiquary so old and study-worn as Dr. Jameson then was.

I have said that I had another trifling anecdote connected with the "raid of Roslin," and here it comes. Among my supporters in that imbecile project, Mr. B. Macleod, I think, was in earnest, and he therefore felt vexed when the "ploy" was given up. Macleod was a stalwart Highlander, irritable in temper, and of burly strength and muscle. One morning after supper, some unfortunate wight, half dreaming, I suppose, happened

to say that he did not think the plan altogether right, and therefore would not engage in it. Macleod's wrath overtook him in a twinkling, and he demanded, by what title he presumed to lay down the law about right and wrong in such worshipful company? The good bodie insisted that he presumed no farther than to lay down the law for himself.

"In short," said Macleod, "you mean to say, that if we are all determined to do what in your precious opinion is not entirely right, you will turn tail and sneak off!"

"Exactly so!"

"Then," responded the Highlander, "I'll tell you what. So long as I'm altogether in the right, any and every man, nay, every tailor that is but the ninth fraction of a man, will stand by me. D'ye call that friendship? I don't. Such friends are all tailors. If an honest fellow says to me: 'Mac, I'm going to the devil;' I tell him, of course, that he shall do no such thing; but if I find that he is resolved and *must* go, then says I, by G—, comrade, we'll march down stairs together!"

Now the sentiment, though thus travestied and carried (over a bowl of punch) *à l'outrance*, I fancied was at bottom a very noble one. Instantly, I proposed Macleod's health in a bumper, with

three times three; and these cheers were reiterated almost every night for the next six weeks or more, for out of that trifling incident (a pebble thrown into the placid lake) arose a club, whose convivial circles did for some time make a great noise in Edinburgh, and to which James Hogg repeatedly alludes in his personal memoirs. It was entitled the "Right, Wrong or Right Club;" its leading maxim being the Highlander's sentiment, that a friend could do no wrong, but must have his comrade's protection and support in all his undertakings, however eccentric and questionable they might be. It is surely superfluous to observe that this was not altogether wise; but there is no *dictum* that will not find abettors, if it be perseveringly recommended by a series of dinners. Consequently, our club flourished, and, unlike most other clubs, its meetings took place every day; the members re-assembling by five o'clock at Oman's Hotel. It might have lasted longer than it did, but for two events; first, the serious illness of the Ettrick Shepherd, who acted as croupier, and with whom such unremitting festivities did not quite agree; secondly, my sudden abdication of the chair, as founder and president of the club, whose vagaries, with the Shepherd's help, suited well enough for the evening amusements of a briefless barrister and bachelor, but which I could not

reconcile with the habits of a married life. The club's last demonstration was the first of the anniversary dinners (since annual) in honour of Burns. I should have presided, but, at the date in question, was resident at the house of my wife's uncle in Northumberland.

CHAPTER IX.

PECUNIARY EMBARRASSMENTS. — LANDED PROPERTY SOLD. — PRACTICAL LESSONS THENCE DERIVED.—"THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME."—RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. JOHN CLARK, AUTHOR OF "NAVAL TACTICS," AND OF LORD ELDIN.—THE REV. JOHN THOMSON.—MISS JANE PORTER.—MR. DE QUINCEY.—"PETER'S LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK."

I HAVE already reiterated the praises of a country life. I have insisted on my own partiality for a secluded home, and for habits of regular, consecutive study. Such repetitions, no doubt, may be somewhat tiresome to my readers; but every autobiographer has his crotchet or hobby-horse, and this, from youth to age, has been mine. As already said, my object during the last twenty-five years has been to find a quiet asylum to which I could cleave like the snail to his shell, and whence I could regard, at a convenient distance, what is usually called the world. I have wished for a home where I could contemplate the sun's trinity in peace, unclouded and undisturbed either by town smoke or worldly contentions.

These impressions were on my mind in their

full force during the year 1815, and under adverse circumstances led to a sort of antagonism and warfare not over pleasant. Within three or four months after I had settled into domestic life, I received formal and peremptory intimation that the bonds I had signed in 1811 would be rigorously enforced, and that unless I were prepared with a round sum in hard cash, the poor acres to which I have so often alluded must be brought judicially to the hammer. With my whole heart and strength I revolted against this. My late brother-in-law, Capt. Æneas Macdonell, had a few hundreds, which he placed cheerfully at my disposal; but under all the circumstances, his aid alone could not suffice, and I had no other.

My father's debts, my own debt (of 2000*l.* only), were, together, such as the land could well bear, leaving a moderate income for the proprietor; but those unlucky bonds of 1811 were an overwhelming load, and these *only* were enforced. I sought, of course, for a loan; but the peace of Europe, with all its rejoicings, had brought panic into the money market. Large failures had occurred, more were expected, and as usual on such occasions, rich capitalists hardened their hearts, double-locked their coffers, and even growled over their own daily expenditure.

In vain did I plead that the debt had not been

incurred for any purposes of my own, and that eventually the burden of payment must be shared by others at whose request I had become liable. Our national register office was open to all money lenders; and it revealed this formidable mortgage to its full amount. It was therefore needful that I should find a customer for the original bonds to their full extent, without any deduction; and this being impossible, I was left to my own resources and my own private friends, who, unluckily, were not numbered among the rich. Instead of wishing to promote my plans, and assist in their turn, my relations (with one exception) were determined on the sale, and I did not hear, till after it was over, of the consolation they had devised for me in the shape of another speculation, the success of which would be rendered "cock-sure" by ready cash to the amount of 10,000*l*. So I took measures as I best could. My old acquaintance, Mr. White, the landscape gardener, happened to call on us. I requested him to survey the property, and give an estimate of its value, stating that of the woods in particular. He did this carefully, and armed with the valuation, I waited on Lord Alloway, one of my trustees, who concurred in my views that the property ought not to be offered in the market at a price lower than that indicated by Mr. White; also that no sale should take place except by public

auction. Comforted by this, I went, with my wife and brother-in-law, to Kincardineshire, where my mother had preceded us. I little thought that the present would be the last season I should ever spend there. My friend Captain Macdonell was buoyed up, as I was, with hopes that the property would be saved from the hammer, and we concerted divers plans to avert that catastrophe; plans which it required only a little time and management to ripen. But my opponents were too active; the march of ruin is usually both stealthy and rapid.

The autumnal season assumed all its beauty. The well-known woods, fields, and rivers, never had appeared so attractive as then. Towards the end of September, an intending purchaser favoured us with a visit, but I adhered so inflexibly to Mr. White's valuation, which he thought much over the mark, that I regarded him as *hors de combat.* Notwithstanding my plans and obstinacy of purpose, I had misgivings occasionally, such as are indicated in the following sonnet:—

ON THE SOUTH WIND.

Sept. 29, 1815.

How often have I listen'd to that sound,
Through sweet autumnal days, and when the night
Reigned still around, and by the taper's light
I sat absorb'd in studious thoughts profound!
Oh, who will listen to those murmurs wild
When I am gone? Perchance this tranquil bower
With mirth will echo at the midnight hour;

But those enchantments which my time beguil'd
No longer will be known. And yet the morn
Will rise as fair; the southern gales will blow,
And tints autumnal will the scenes adorn,
And all the charms that Nature can bestow
Still flourish; but amid the groves and streams,
No more will rise the poet's faery dreams.

Towards the middle of October, the dream was broken. Most unexpectedly I received a letter from one of my trustees to the effect that a sale had taken place by private bargain, at a price lower by 4000*l.* than that for which my friend White had stipulated. In the morning of that day I had especially wished for quiet, being occupied more than ever with arrangements by which the property might have been saved and the burdens on it gradually liquidated. But instantly I ordered post-horses, and during a tempest of wind and rain, proceeded with my wife to Forfar, where we remained next day in order to consult with certain friends and advisers of Col. Hay, to whom the estate had been sold. They expressed sympathy with my feelings, and thought that the sale should be annulled, whilst the purchaser, on the contrary, proved immitigable; "the bargain had been made," said he, "and he would abide by it." Next day I proceeded to Edinburgh, where my faithful and intelligent housekeeper was prepared to receive us. "*Quid multis morar?*" Upon

inquiry, it became clear enough, that with Lord Alloway's help, I might have it in my power to dispute the sale; but Sir James Gibson Craig (another of my trustees), after long expostulation, persuaded me to acquiesce in it. Sir James was agent for those very relations whose minds had been bent upon the sale, and I doubt not he thought that their views were far wiser than mine, and, therefore, conscientiously recommended what seemed to him best for both parties.

After a few days spent in town, I returned to the north, only to take leave of home for ever. The sale of effects, the packing up and numberless other arrangements, were left in charge of my kind friend Capt. Macdonell.—As to all such matters, I now felt reckless, and we returned to Edinburgh.

Non meâ causâ, sed aliorum. Instead of looking on the preceding paragraphs as if they consisted of mere egotism, I think they may afford for some readers a good practical lesson. They are evidence in support of my two aphorisms, 1st. that "if a proprietor wishes to save hereditary acres, he should openly avow his resolution, and, therefore, sturdily refuse to grant a mortgage;" 2dly, "if he comes under an obligation at the request of his best friends, let him not for a moment suppose that in his own hour of trial they will be

ready to support him in their turn." This is not reasonably to be expected; it was not "in the bond;" moreover, he and they, look upon the objective matter through a quite dissimilar medium.

> "A little tranquil home
> Is all I ask on earth, and add to this
> My book and friend, and it is happiness."

What then is *home?* Upon due consideration of the preceding lines, and according to their spirit rather than the letter, I think it must be defined as consisting of the sheltering roof, the friend, and the book. Take any one of these away, and the idea of the happy home is mutilated; nay, annihilated. Consequently, the happiness and well-being of the friend (or friends), the stability of the sheltering roof, and the sufficiency of the book (or books), are indispensable *desiderata.* Now it was clear enough, that with proper management I had means enough left to provide for all three; and, perhaps, like our great poet, when at Mossgiel (who possessed as little worldly cunning as the very weakest of sonneteers), I said to myself: "Come, go to, I will be wise!" Moreover, I had a profession, and for some time that winter I rose early and went to the Parliament House, as if I had seriously thought of practising at the bar. In consequence of such activity I did receive a fee

now and then, but it was only upon occasions where patience and assiduity were needed in preparing the case for a senior counsel. In one of those instances, finding that three guineas were my guerdon for ten days' approved labour and much writing, I foolishly gave up the pursuit from a notion that the same quantum of time and strength which were needed to ensure an income of 400*l.* or 500*l.* per annum at the bar, would ensure double that amount by literature. About that time, I think, by far the largest income earned at the Scotch bar, fell to the lot of Mr. John Clerk, afterwards Lord Eldin; who, in his way, certainly merits a place in my category of eccentrics and originals. He had hereditary talents, for his father, who lived to a great age and resided in the country, did, in utter seclusion and wholly unassisted, achieve the work once well-known as Clerk's "Naval Tactics."

This venerable gentleman ought, indeed, to have been specially cited in my chapter on the advantages of cultivating a natural talent by consecutive application in retirement. How well do I remember his home, which was an unassuming domicile, in farm-house fashion, sheltered by Scotch firs on the hill above Lasswade! But on the level ground towards the south, he had a garden which I must pause to describe. Many times I have

walked there when it was a neglected place, only to wonder at the traces left of a genius still surviving, though the figure and voice of the man were no longer among us. There was a loch or piece of water (no better originally than a duck pond), in that garden; and in the middle of the loch was a green island, fashioned into the form of a ship, and planted with masts, which tradition said were on fête days gaily flagged. This island-ship might, I suppose, have been the gardener's fancy; who, possibly, enacted a part analogous to that of Corporal Trim. But there is at least no doubt as to the fact, that on the waters of this loch, Mr. Clerk did arrange his mimic fleets and fight his battles, as perseveringly as Mr. Tobias Shandy, in former days, marshalled his battalions, and planted his "petereroes." That secluded loch and garden were his *studio;* he was there in his glory—many a fierce engagement, no doubt, took place, in which the admiral (whose commission was not conferred by any crowned head, but by his own genius) was always the victor. And these amusements, which certain wiseacres might have laughed at as demonstrations of second childhood, formed an epoch in the naval history of Great Britain! Mr. Clerk, working out his plans in solitude, achieved more for tactics as a science, than any naval officer had done or could have

attempted amidst the bustle of professional duties.

But I wished to speak of Mr. John Clerk, the barrister and judge, whose habits and temper were in his advanced years so wayward and odd, that it was a wonder he could retain so much practice as he did. Most part of the business at the Scotch bar is transacted by written arguments at great length, which are printed in quarto, lumbering the tables of the judges, and which they are expected to wade through and study. Mr. Clerk usually despised this department of the profession, and would leave the writing of papers to "author bodies, and sic like." His strength was, as a pleader, *vivâ voce*, and for this he prepared himself by "communings" with attorneys and agents, whom in private cross-questioning he often treated with great rudeness and contempt. Like all good counsellors, he invariably took up his opponent's part in the first place, and, if possible, worked it out in all its bearings, so that he might be forearmed to meet and demolish his adversary on every point. One of the greatest annoyances to a briefless barrister at Edinburgh is, that if he looks for employment he must attend "the house" daily from nine till two, although his time be spent only in idle talk or idle listening. Many an hour that would otherwise have hung heavily, has been be-

guiled for me by Clerk's speeches, which I found a never-failing source of entertainment. His broad Scotch dialect, which he cherished for its power of expression, the breadth and lucidity with which he brought out his case, his often recurring fits of disdainful and immitigable wrath, his merciless and withering sarcasm were altogether admirable. Other advocates might assume the tone of anger and make more noise than he (for example James Fergusson), but in contemptuous sarcasm he was unequalled. Truly I do not wonder at the anecdote recorded of an accomplished member of the House of Peers, who enjoined the doorkeepers always to send him notice when Mr. Clerk was to plead in an appeal cause, as he took so much pleasure in being among his audience.

But I have said that Lord Eldin deserved to be commemorated as a veritable original, and this for many reasons, of which I need adduce only one. During my long experience, I have never known the mania for "*vertu*," in plainer terms for painting and sculpture, carried by a mere amateur to such a degree as it was by John Clerk. He was regarded as one of the wickedly wise (or wisely wicked) among Scotch Whigs. He was a clear-headed far-sighted man, who could detect fallacies at a glance, and with unsparing irony "showed up" the follies, prejudices, and

crotchets of his neighbours. The "Capen" of the "cautious Clara" himself, could hardly be a more sagacious, taciturn, and oracular referee on occasions of difficulty, than wise wicked old John. And yet, respecting the value of an old picture, or bust, or snuff-box he would, with all his wisdom, allow himself to be cheated as meekly as a lamb; nay, he would walk into the snare with his eyes open, and seemed to glory in it. On one occasion he gave 700*l.* for two pictures which had not cost the vendor more than 38*l.*, and which I am very sure would not in all the world have found another purchaser at a price beyond 70*l.* But who can tell what value they possessed *esthetically* in his estimation? The value of a picture to an amateur, assuredly cannot be determined by the question, how much will it bring in the market. Very probably Lord Eldin would not have sold them again if 7,000*l.* had been proffered. He alone (or the vendor) could discover their transcendent merits.

It is almost needless to add that, by degrees, he had accumulated a large collection. But it was not as an amateur only that John Clerk manifested his energy of purpose. Seeing that professionally he had the most important and intricate cases brought before him, he, of course, underwent great labour, and much needed relaxation and variety, for which he had several resources—namely, modelling, painting, training of cats and dogs: lastly,

the pleasures of a private establishment (his "hermitage") on the sea-shore. There can be little doubt that if his duties at the bar had not come in the way, Mr. Clerk would have been a good artist; and *malgré cela*, he modelled much in clay after the manner of Michael Angelo; and he painted, I suppose, in emulation also of the same illustrious precursor. Of his productions in the former department, I have seen divers specimens, grotesque and serious, which found their way down stairs; but to the *studio* above, where stood perpetually on the easel one solitary canvas—one great picture, which was to be the achievement of his whole life —no one but the most intimate *crony* was ever admitted. There can be little doubt that he had vividly formed the conception of a great work which might one day take a conspicuous place in the grand reception rooms below, but it never found its way thither. Alas! his difficulty has been that of many a great genius, driven from his proper course by the waves of adverse circumstances. It is very easy to feel; it is natural to some, and they cannot help feeling like artists ("*anch' io son pittore*" said the poor starving Corregio, in his obscure village). It is also easy and natural to conceive a great work; but as to executive power, there is the difficulty, for this depends upon unbroken attention, the use of all possible means,

and the unremitting application of day after day for years. It is surely needless to add that, notwithstanding his perpetually recurring efforts, the great work in question was left unfinished.

Of all the brother artists who associated with Lord Eldin, out of sight the most distinguished was our Scottish Ruysdael (or Salvator and Ruysdael conjoined), the Rev. John Thomson of Duddingstone. But indeed he was *sui generis* and thoroughly original—a poetical painter and student of Nature deserving the very highest honours. By constant application in his quiet manse beside Duddingstone Loch, *incredibili industriâ*, he had brought his art of landscape painting to a degree of excellence almost unequalled. There was not an old willow tree about the said loch, or an interesting group in Lord Abercorn's adjoining park, that had not their portraits taken by him again and again in the various lights and tints of morning and evening, spring and autumn. But though Nature everywhere offered him objects for study, he did not rest contented with the tame scenery of the lowlands, but almost every autumn allowed himself the pleasure of an excursion into the wildest and most romantic districts of the Highlands, whence he returned with his portfolio richly stored. Certainly he was about the last among living artists who would have thought of landscape painting as a

source of pecuniary emolument. It was his favourite amusement and solace, and consequently he thought as little about *L. s. d.* when employed at his easel as he did when boating on the loch on a summer's eve, and watching the echoes of his flute from the rocks of Arthur's Seat. Yet now and then, if he sent pictures to be exhibited, so obvious was their superiority, that high prices were proffered, and in some instances, I believe, accepted. We had professional painters—Williams, for example, and the Nasmyths, father and son—who were deservedly admired and extolled; but there was a dignity, and strength, and originality of manner in Thomson's productions which, before his time, were unexampled among us. And he could perform wondrous feats in unheard-of ways, which others tried indeed, but without success. For example, his landscape compositions, *á la* Poussin, traced with burnt stick dipt in grease, were executed with incredible rapidity, and were yet in their way so perfect that no artist could equal them.

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Among numberless MSS. of those years that are lost to me for ever, I have to regret the disappearance of some long letters from Miss Jane Porter, who then surely held the first rank among authoresses, excepting of course Miss Baillie and

Miss Edgeworth. (But, indeed, each of the three had a peculiar path of her own.) On the publication of "Thaddeus of Warsaw," many years earlier, I remember that our exemplary world, owlish and obtuse as it usually is in detecting the finer shades of excellence, was yet undeniably struck. "Thaddeus" conquered even the sarcastic coldness of wise, wicked John Clerk; for I recollect his recommending and praising it very seriously as the best new romance that he had met with for many a day. There was, indeed, a force and earnestness, a poetical spirit, and, if I can be allowed the paradox, a stedfast devotion to truth in all her fictions, such as have rarely been equalled. Such books were "easy reading;" but though, perhaps, they might be achieved with rapidity, were most certainly not "easy writing." The whole mind and attention of the authoress were given to her subject whatsoever it might be. Hence the admirable fidelity or *vraisemblance* of all her pictures, and the force with which she conveys her hero's or heroine's emotions. To accomplish this, as I have said, could not have been an easy task; and her health, as she avowed, suffered considerably from every long work that she carried through the press. Even in her "Aphorisms of Sir Philip Sydney," there is original talent, for the preface is written with earnest enthusiasm, and the selection and

arrangement of the citations, could not have been managed except by a truly chivalresque, as well as romantic mind. In proof of the stedfast attention with which she contemplated the objective matter of every work on hand, "Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative" affords a notable instance. Long ago we had, in the far North, a certain laird of Ardovie, an elderly gentleman, not over learned, who being confined by indisposition, received from his physician the loan of a book, which happened to be "Gulliver's Travels." To the doctor's inquiry, some days afterwards, how he liked it, Ardovie responded that, "certainly it was a very curious book, there was no denying that; but, for his own part, he did not believe above *half* on't." That the old laird might be thus gulled to believe one half of Gulliver, was no great wonder; but that a wise, learned reviewer, in the nineteenth century, in a *tranchant* article, accusing others of ignorance, should refer gravely to Jane Porter's *Voyage Imaginaire* of Sir Edward Seaward, as a veracious, and therefore important chronicle of events, was certainly more than the authoress herself could ever have anticipated. The circumstance reminds one of what happened some little time ago in Greece; where, as Aulus Gellius, and others, inform us, a certain painter to his own amazement, deceived the birds, who came and

pecked at his imitative grapes; whereupon a neighbouring artist, feeling rather nettled, set himself to paint a curtain; and having done so, invited inspection from his rival, who, entering the studio, said directly:—"Come, away with the curtain, and let us see what you have been about!" This rival bears some sort of analogy to the wise reviewer, as the birds do to good old Ardovie!

Her brother, Sir R. K. Porter, from whom I had the honour to receive some visits, was one of the most agreeable companions, and most accomplished men that I can remember to have met. Beloved in his regiment, and vigilant in his duties as a cavalry officer, he yet found time for literature and the arts. His quarto volumes are hastily and sketchily written; the wonder was how he could find leisure to write them at all. The last friendly recognition with which Miss Porter honoured me, was by a letter of introduction brought to us in 1825 by Mr. D'Olenine, captain of the Russian Imperial Guard, a young gentleman of birth and fortune, who came to Edinburgh at that time, and finding us at a cottage on the sea-side, kindly staid to dinner on the day of his arrival. The hours flew fast in his society, for in languages, poetry, romance, and music, he was pre-eminently accomplished. So perfect was his command of English, German, and French, that he might have

passed for a native in any of the three countries, and I doubt not that he was equally well prepared in Italian and Spanish. I was then, and at this hour remain the only one who ever translated into English even a single page from the works of Doctor Raupach, who, when at St. Petersburg, had the honour of being Mr. D'Olenine's instructor and guide in the German language and literature. This circumstance being discovered after a few minutes' interview, was alone sufficient to give confidence and spirit to our conversation. I cherished a sincere respect for the author of the "Erdennacht," and wished to hear as much as possible of his domestic character and literary habits. On the visits that we received from Mr. D'Olenine during his short stay at Edinburgh, I reflect with much pleasure, and have regretted that we never met since.

A calm domestic life, it is said, affords but little to record. In the following year, 1816, I wrote many verses, all bearing, however, indirectly on one favourite notion, namely, that there were two spheres or worlds; the influences of the one being in fierce antagonism with those of the other, also that the poet's happiness and well-being depended mainly on the question, how much of his time he could contrive to pass in the imaginary, to the utter exclusion of the real world. This, of course,

was a very thankless task, in which the votaries of the real world could not reasonably be expected to take much interest, and as I did not for one moment think of conciliating them, my productions were vastly original perhaps, but also very queer and odd. The most notable among them was a poem in four books, written with great rapidity, entitled "Oswald," which was afterwards beautifully printed in quarto (1817). It never was published, and the hundred copies which I still possessed in 1826, are now utterly lost. But before the year 1816 was done, I had begun my gropings in the dark after foreign literature, having, I know not how (unless it were by some hints from Sir Walter Scott), got a notion that the German language concealed from us an inexhaustible mine of the richest ore. At the same time I became gradually more impressed by a conviction, that the pleasures which even a poor man (if not starving) might obtain for himself, by persevering labour and application, were far better than those of the idle rich, who passively resign themselves to mere indulgence. For example, the writer of a good drama, *selon moi*, should be viewed not only as a more meritorious, but far happier man than his rich patron, whose exertions are limited to going into the theatre to be amused. Still I cherished my early propensities for reading all

which others would not or did not read. For example, I grasped with avidity at Butler's "Lives of the Saints," and felt great satisfaction in tracking over again his laborious course through the writings of the Fathers, not forgetting the folios of the Bollandists, which had stood undisturbed in the Advocates' library from time immemorial.

During the winter of 1815-16 (or the next) Mr. De Quincey accompanied his friend, the author of the "Isle of Palms," from Westmoreland to Edinburgh. I had then an opportunity of observing the literary character in an entirely new phasis, for up to that time, De Quincey, though he had spent long years in assiduous study, and by his friends was regarded as a powerful author, had not, so far as I know, published a single line. He seemed, indeed, to live for the sake of the labour alone, and to fling overboard all considerations either of the *palma* or *pecunia*. His various literary compositions, written in his exemplary hand (the best I ever saw, except Southey's) on little scraps of paper, must have reached to a great extent, but in his own estimation they were by no means "ready for the press;" like an over-cautious general, he withheld his fire, and remained "*multa et pulchra minans.*" Not only for this reason, but in other respects Mr. De Quincey seemed to me to bring out the literary character in a new

light. Very decisively he realized my plan of moving in a separate world (having no doubt realities of its own); moreover, he neither spoke nor acted in the every-day world like any one else, for which, of course, I greatly honoured him. He was then in the habit of taking opium daily as an article of food, and the drug, though used for years, had scarcely *begun* to tell on his constitution, by those effects which, sooner or later, overtake every one of its persevering votaries; and which, when they once appear, make quick work in demolishing together the man physical and the man intellectual; the latter being reduced to the pitiable plight of a musician who essays to play by means of a harp unstrung and broken. But in his case, it had not worked any such evils as yet, and in after years, though not without a long and tough battle, Mr. De Quincey succeeded in vanquishing the narcotic devil.

His voice was extraordinary; it came as if from dream-land; but it was the most musical and impressive of voices. In convivial life, what then seemed to me the most remarkable trait of De Quincey's character was the power he possessed of easily changing the tone of ordinary thought and conversation into that of his own dream-land, till his auditors, with wonder, found themselves moving pleasantly along with him in a sphere of

which they might have heard and read, perhaps, but which had ever appeared to them inaccessible, and far, far away! Seeing that he was always good-natured and social, he would take part, at commencement, in any sort of tattle or twaddle. The talk might be of "beeves," and he could grapple with them if expected to do so, but his musical cadences were not in keeping with such work, and in a few minutes (not without some strictly logical sequence) he could escape at will from beeves to butterflies, and thence to the soul's immortality, to Plato, and Kant, and Schelling, and Fichte, to Milton's early years and Shakspeare's sonnets, to Wordsworth and Coleridge, to Homer and Eschylus, to St. Thomas of Aquin, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom. But he by no means excluded themes from real life, according to his own views of that life, but would recount profound mysteries from his own experiences—visions that had come over him in his loneliest walks among the mountains, and passages within his own personal knowledge, illustrating, if not proving, the doctrines of dreams, of warnings, of second-sight, and mesmerism. And whatsoever the subject might be, every one of his sentences (or of his chapters I might say) was woven into the most perfect logical texture, and uttered in a tone of sustained melody.

Such powers and acquirements could not fail to excite wonder at Edinburgh. He had, indeed, studied "all such books as are never read" in that enlightened capital, and was the first friend I had ever met who could profess to have a command over the German language, and who consequently was able (*ex cathedrâ*) to corroborate my notions of the great stores that were contained therein. I flatter myself that he found our house not altogether uncongenial, as he was kind enough to visit there more frequently than in any other.

Before parting with the year 1816, I shall only observe farther, that during a drive into the country, towards some of my old haunts, my wife and I came to a cottage *ornée* on the hill above Lasswade, which riveted our attention, and which, with the approbation of my friend, Captain Macdonell, I forthwith purchased, although, being under lease for the next eight months, it could not be ready to receive us till the summer following. Of this cottage, eight years afterwards, some humorous and kind notices occurred in "Letters to his Kinsfolk, by Peter Morris, M.D." (Edinb. 1824) a work in many respects so remarkable and distinguished, that I had intended giving some extracts from it in this place; but I must content myself with merely referring to it *now*.

CHAPTER X.

STUDY OF MODERN LANGUAGES. — BARON VON RABENSTEIN.— REV. DR. GARDINER. — FATHER WALLACE. — "BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE." — THE "CHALDEE MANUSCRIPT." — PROFESSOR WILSON. — MR. J. G. LOCKHART. — THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD AGAIN. — THE LATE DUKE OF BUCCLEUGH.—MRS. BROOKE RICHMOND.

If in early youth education has been neglected or defective, feeling conscious of that deficiency, one should boldly set to work to "educate himself." I thought of this wise maxim when I wished to cultivate modern languages, especially German, Danish, Swedish, Italian, Spanish and French. Now it is very true that knowledge, I mean critical knowledge, of languages has in all times and in all countries been in the possession only of a select few who are looked up to and wondered at accordingly. It is, perhaps, fitting that it should be so. But alas! we were in such a plight at Edinburgh in regard to contemporary foreign literature, that we had scarcely a single book to study, or one competent teacher. Moreôver, we were of opinion that the German stores had been well nigh ex-

hausted already by such prodigious efforts as those of Holcrofft, M. G. Lewis, Mr. B. Thompson, and a few more, so that there was little left to requite a student's labour. And this was in the year 1817, when the German press overflowed with productions most forcible and original, of which a few stray leaves are all that have found their way into England up to the present hour!

I remember well my vain quest after German books and German professors, and what triumph it was to discover, at last, one solitary author, although of the old school, namely, Wieland, in twenty or thirty volumes, which by some inexplicable chance had found their way to the shelves of Mr. Laing, bookseller, where I did not allow them to rest long. I was not quite wild enough to suppose, as some others have done, that it may be possible to acquire foreign languages without assistance; and I remember well how my first inquiries after teachers led me to the obscure domiciles of Mr. John Michael and Mr. James Pierard, two very ancient gentlemen in extreme poverty, to whom, therefore, I eagerly proffered their fees in advance. The former was a Prussian Jew, who possibly understood Hebrew, but was incompetent to translate one page of Wieland; the latter a Frenchman, who undertook to give lessons because he had sojourned many years at a German *rezidenz*,

but unluckily, without acquiring the language which he professed to teach. "I have *von* German book," said he at our first interview—"Le voilà! mais il faut avouer, — dere are some sentences vich I do *not* understand!" I remember, too, when and how a certain worthy arrived at Edinburgh, who on his visiting cards actually called himself "Baron Rabenstein, de Rabenstein, dans le Carniolique" (which might be freely translated Baron Gibbet, of Gibbet Manor), and who advertised in the newspapers, warning the literati that he could not promise to remain long at Athens, and that all who were disposed to learn, had better profit forthwith by an opportunity, which would never occur again, of acquiring in perfection every language of modern Europe. If some wicked wit had devised a plan merely for turning our enlightened metropolis into ridicule, he could scarcely have managed better than did the Baron von Rabenstein, whose only purposes were to secure good living whilst he stayed, and to retire peaceably with a few pounds in his purse—plans in which he succeeded, being indeed equally well prepared in all the European languages!

The effrontery of this man was enormous. I never met with such a stalwart, arrogant impostor, and apparently he succeeded at Edinburgh in proportion to his impudence. Divers among the wise

and learned were deceived by him; for so long as he confined his lectures to languages of which they were avowedly ignorant, he might pocket his fees without suspicion. Even professors of the College, masters of the High School, and members of the very learned faculty of Advocates, desired the honour of his acquaintance, and were hood-winked. One of the latter, who took his regular lessons, told me *ore rotundo*, and with an air of importance, that if I wished for the Baron's aid, I must look sharp, for the great man's hours were already all engaged from eight in the morning till eight P.M., but he had the four hours from eight till midnight still vacant; moreover, was already gaining a steady income of £50 per month!

Accordingly the Baron favoured me with a visit at eight o'clock in a beautiful summer's eve; and after a complimentary preamble in vicious French, he informed me that he himself being a native of Spain, and his mother having been a German, he had hereditary pretensions to both the languages which I most desiderated. So we set to work instantly with Schiller's "Glocke," of which I had two copies, the Baron assuring me that after twenty-four of his lectures, all difficulties would evanish. But unluckily, after our so-called translation of the first two stanzas, the product, in my opinion, was woful nonsense, whereupon my learned

visitor favoured me with a disquisition on the peculiarity and wildness of German genius, which, not caring to hear, I took down a volume of Calderon for variety; but alas! the Spanish author, as it soon appeared, had been a still wilder genius than Schiller, and wrote, if possible, still greater nonsense. The Baron favoured me with his attendances for some time, as I had purchased half a dozen of his tickets; but he evidently mistrusted his pupil, and with reason, for at last I placed before him a stanza of Ariosto, on the pretence that it contained a difficulty, whereas on the contrary I knew the import of every syllable. Every language being entirely familiar to this worthy professor, he forthwith achieved a translation, according to which it became evident that Ariosto, in point of wildness, and disregard for common sense, was fully equal to Calderon or Schiller. The Baron's treatment of his author was in keeping with that of the Aberdonian student, who, being called on to translate Horace's line,

"Exegi monumentum, aere perennius,"

boldly responded,

"I have eaten up a mountain harder than brass."

But a mountain made of brass could not have supplied enough to shield my learned friend against the effects of this exposure. I never betrayed him,

however; I only declined his future lectures. He held on at Edinburgh for two or three months, and then suddenly disappeared.

In those days, so far as I know, we had at Edinburgh only one man of good education who condescended to give lessons in various modern languages—namely, the late Dr. William Gardiner, formerly English pastor at Dantzig, and then a colleague of Mr. Alison and Mr. Morehead at St. John's chapel. My kind-hearted good old friend! How many days, winter and summer, early and late, in town or in country, we have cheerfully met to prosecute our studies! Dr. Gardiner had in his youth travelled on the Continent with Mr. Johnston of Alva. He had made it a point to acquire French and Italian during his residence in those countries; and a knowledge of German had come to him as a matter of course when he was established at Dantzig. Moreover he was an excellent classical scholar.

At our numberless meetings I used to have invariably two copies of the same author, wherewith we took our places at opposite sides of the table. My object was to get as soon as possible into the very heart of the book, trusting that knowledge of the language would, in some mysterious manner, come afterwards. It was the old north country method revived—a superstructure without ade-

quate foundation, a conclusion without sufficient premises; but the doctor was far too good-natured to gainsay any mode of study, however wild. We were both thoroughly agreed upon one point, namely, that betwixt us, the meaning of the author, however obscure, *must* be brought out faithfully even to its very remotest shade, and there was no difficulty, once grappled with, which we did not work out at last. These were, indeed, pleasant days, busily and harmlessly spent! Whilst we carefully read through the "Orlando" for amusement, thus paving the way towards all other Italian writers of *ottava rima*, we did from other motives cleave to Petrarch, namely, from a determination to become familiar with all his abbreviations, and to sift out the meaning of all his *concetti*. I had three copies of the Sonnets, one of them old, and containing far more of annotations than text. But our best amusement occurred after I became an *exigeant* task-master of my reverend preceptor, inasmuch, as I insisted, that, though far advanced in years, he should commence the study of Spanish, a language with which hitherto he had never meddled at all. With this intent I purchased a second copy of Calderon, and got a third from the Advocates' library, all of which were soon in requisition.

Father Wallace, private chaplain to the Earl of

Traquair, was frequently at Edinburgh, and came readily to our aid. He even staid in town for the purpose, for so great was his zeal for the honour of the Spanish language and literature, that he would at any time go out of his way to make proselytes in their behalf. My kind and respected friend, Mr. Wallace! he was indeed the model of a Christian pastor, willing to assist every one in all possible ways, whilst he himself might feel thoroughly independent of all the world, living as he did the whole year round on pulse and *farine*, a system which, according to his own words, he did not adopt from any motives of austerity, self-discipline, or vows of poverty, but simply because he preferred that regimen to any other. Now, Doctor Gardiner and I, when Father Wallace was of the council, did most ludicrously change positions, for the doctor at last became far more impatient under instruction than I was, and wished to move on at places where our mutual friend, with the most perfect knowledge of his author, nevertheless brought us obdurately to a stand still. The minutest shade of meaning caused by a subjunctive mood, the misplacing of a comma or other critical *finesse*, never escaped the lynx eye of Mr. Wallace, and however childish or irrelevant to the plot might be the *concetto* immediately before us, he would not advance one step farther till the last

thread of the knot was disentangled. But to compensate for these trials he kindly lent to us divers volumes of modern Spanish authors, especially poets, directing our attention to the more beautiful specimens. And of those authors, I doubt not, Mr. Wallace is, *in Scotland*, the only possessor up to this day.

Literary men are apt to mark epochs in their lives by the appearance of this or that remarkable publication, just as a politician dates from the occurrence of some desperate cabal in the House, or from the outbreak of a war. I think it was towards the close of the year 1817, that a sort of warfare did break out at Edinburgh, in a very whimsical manner, having for its indirect cause the emergence of the first number of "Blackwood's Magazine." And truly this afforded, in its way, as notable an illustration of our then existing state of society, as any that I have yet adduced in these memoranda. My good friend, the Ettrick Shepherd, had often talked to me on the propriety and duty of establishing a new monthly miscellany to supersede that of Constable, which dragged on a sort of dead and alive existence, having no attractions for any class of readers under the sun. And he very properly insisted that the new journal ought to be a "bold, uncompromising, *out-spoken*

work, having on all points originality, freedom, and freshness of style to recommend it." Among the Shepherd's acquaintances and cronies from the Forest was the late Thomas Pringle, author of divers meritorious poems, a young man of excellent literary tact, and of most amiable disposition, mild, persevering, patient, and industrious, who, on the strength principally of his own patience—fortitude without fortune—determined to establish a new Edinburgh magazine. Too truly, he could not manage this alone, but he was on good terms with divers brethren of the quill; moreover, he had a colleague whose name I think (but am not sure) was Cleghorn; a burly man, with a strong voice and very dictatorial manner, who was, or had been, editor of the Farmer's Magazine. [Both of them had the misfortune to be incurably lame, Pringle skipping about briskly on crutches; his friend, I think, seldom moved from his chair]. The former was of course to represent the "*Dichter*," the latter the "*Weltmann*" of the plot. At my friend Hogg's suggestion, I had some interviews with these worthies, at which Pringle, with great complacency, pointed to a large square box as the treasury, into which, from time to time, he had been depositing materials.

I wrote for them a long paper which was forthwith printed, namely, a review in favour of

Hogg's "Dramatic Tales," just then published, and which, with all their faults, I thought and still think, a very marvellous demonstration of the Shepherd's powers. I believe the new magazine went so far as two numbers under the management of Messrs. Pringle and Cleghorn, without making any great sensation, Mr. Blackwood having all the while been hatching his own notions about a magazine, and quietly taking measures to realize them. In his views and plans, whatsoever they were, the two editors did by no means agree. The burly man could dictate willingly enough, but would not submit to dictatorship of the bookseller, in consequence of which a quarrel very naturally arose, and Mr. Blackwood suddenly announced his own "Edinburgh Magazine," to be managed of course according to his own judgment, with a determination that he would declare war against the principles of the "Edinburgh Review," indeed against the whole race of Edinburgh Whigs; moreover, that he would treat with sarcasm and contempt not only the defeated editors, but every author, or authorling, who had presumed to offer him advice or contributions without being competent thereto; contempt, in short, for all except the chosen few with whom he had privately concerted his plans.

The privacy was kept up for some time, though

little or no precaution was used for that purpose. People wondered where the pens had so long lain inert which were now used all of a sudden with such vivacity and acrimony. Where, indeed, were his authors? Visibly and personally they made no manifestations, for the young men who frequented his reading-room did nothing there but, as Cowper said of himself and Thurlow, "giggle, or make giggle." They came seemingly to toss about the newspapers, and pass their jokes on the magazine, its publisher, and on all the world. In this pleasant vein was jotted down a certain "fragment from an ancient Chaldee manuscript" of which Hogg used to claim the paternity; a production now as utterly forgotten, I suppose, as if it really belonged to the Chaldean repertories, but which (no doubt to the amazement of its facetious authors) raised such a commotion at Edinburgh, that nothing like it was on record in our literary annals. This notable fragment was a kind of allegory, than which, in all ages, no style of composition has been found more forcible and *frappant*. The unfortunate editors "skipping upon staves," also Mr. Constable and the Whigs were sarcastically indicated; and the rejected advisers and contributors were all designated as "beasts," who came one after another like a series of monsters *à la* Teniers, clamouring and babbling round a "man

in plain apparel," namely, William Blackwood, who at last addressed them in a speech commencing, "Oh, ye beasts!" of which I forget the substance. It was truly a most laughable *jeu d'esprit*, every hit being intelligible to a select few, whilst the portraits were nevertheless so grotesque and shadowy, and the whole so evidently intended for a harmless joke, that the worthies indicated, had they been wise, might either have joined in the laugh, or treated the matter with silent contempt; but on the contrary, all without exception took offence, and some commenced actions in the Court of Session, and got judgments in their favour for injuries done to their reputation!

Meanwhile the new magazine flourished beyond all precedent, and beyond expectation. Every one talked of it, from the wise and learned judges on the bench, who gave their decisions in defence of "the beasts," down to shopkeepers and other people who had never read a new book till then. For in those days, literary journals published as now at a penny a week, and yet supported by men of genius, were not even dreamt of. (Alas! we may well say in England, *die kunst nach brod geht*, in plain language, genius starves.) Blackwood's first number was immediately bought up, and a new edition issued, from which however the fire-brand "Chaldee" was prudentially excluded.

But by this exclusion the prevalent taste of our amiable public was put to the test. Every purchaser expected to have his copy of the far-famed satire, and every one growled at its absence. Copies of the original number were handed about with manuscript notes, identifying the principal characters, and high prices were occasionally offered for a copy which the fortunate possessor had read and could dispense with. Never, in short, had there been such an uproar made about a scrap of literary *babillage* since the days of Jonathan Swift, and scarcely then.

That this was a lucky and unexpected mode of getting notoriety, a proof also by what means an enlightened public might in future be attracted, is very obvious. It is equally obvious, however, that the Chaldean Shepherd was but the Merry Andrew of the plot; and without originality, strength, vivacity, and freshness in the serious contributions, the unprecedented success of this new journal would have been impossible. It told best of all with discriminating readers who cared not a rush about the "Chaldee Manuscript," though those of course were few in number; but Mr. Blackwood was thus "*utrumque paratus*" for the gossiping majority and the rational minority of readers. By whom were such various and unexpected productions written? The mystification about unknown

authors and a "veiled editor" was for some time very easily kept up; and as Mr. Blackwood ostensibly managed everything, and was his own Coryphæus, the editor might wear the mask as long as he thought proper. Mr. John Wilson and Mr. J. G. Lockhart were on amicable terms with the publisher; but seemingly they had no leisure to write, being otherwise employed. It is very needless to add that eventually the mystification, accidental at first, was, like that of the Waverley authorship, abandoned.

Mr. Wilson, however, complained from the outset that the new magazine, notwithstanding its double columns, allowed no sufficient space for authors to develope their thoughts. Either the articles must be left imperfect, or there would be a want of variety; and instead of desiderating good Mr. Pringle's stores of reserved *copy*, he very decisively maintained that any man in a state of tolerable health, and disposed for literary amusement, might write an entire number in the course of two days! He it was who recommended carrying on the same article in chapters from one month to another, and would print all poetical extracts in diamond type (against which Mr. Mackenzie vehemently protested), and occasionally would have a double number when the stores of unused materials became too cumbersome and extensive.

Moreover, Mr. Wilson *ab initio* took possession of an enormous ledger, originally intended for very different records, and soon filled the volume with so-called "skeletons," any one of which he could select at will, clothe with muscle and nerve, and call into life and action. Thus, betwixt him and Mr. Lockhart, a preposterously long list was announced of articles already written and accepted by the editor, many of which, though "putative," then, did afterwards appear. As a Lilliputian jest, may be recorded, that being honoured in the list with the paternity of a "Sonnet on seeing a spark fall from the Shepherd's pipe," I forthwith wrote the before hypothetical sonnet, and in the next number it was printed, along with a strange figure of a tobacco-smoker from an old wooden block, in good keeping with the grotesque verses.

Of a work so well known, and still flourishing, though in a very different phasis, I need say no more at present. In those early days of its progress, it naturally gave rise to many pleasant meetings, and proved a source of great amusement and hilarity to its supporters, still more, I fancy, than at any time in after years when its character had become firmly established. Mr. Wilson had then a rapidity of executive power in composition, such as I have never seen equalled before nor since. In that way he might be said to realize even the

wonders which are ascribed to Lope de Vega. But as he would do nothing but when he liked and how he liked, his productions, whether serious or comic, might all be regarded as mere *jeux d'esprit* and matters of amusement. Mr. Lockhart, I suppose, was more systematic in his pursuits, though his rapidity of pen was also marvellous. I remember he considered thirty-two columns (a whole printed sheet) as an ordinary day's work, which might be accomplished without the slightest fatigue or stress. At this rate he could well have leisure to spare for other divertisements, and, to a superficial observer, might have appeared at all times quite sufficiently occupied with his portfolio of caricatures, and now and then a law paper, not to reckon his never-failing meerschaum and Maracaibo.

Before that time, some change had occurred in the fortunes of our good friend the Ettrick Shepherd, who had his town-house and country-house, to the latter of which he went (most ineffectively) for the sake of retirement. It was in the year 1816, I think, that he received from that most amiable and exemplary of noblemen, the late Duke of Buccleugh, a lease, *rent-free*, of Altrive Lake, a farm in Ettrick, near St. Mary's Loch. I feel very sure that on this occasion it was the duke's intention to provide permanently for Hogg's well-

being and stability in the world. He believed that Altrive farm, properly managed, would yield quite enough for the necessary expenses of a man so easily contented as his friend the Shepherd (for after their first meeting, the kind-hearted duke ever named him as his friend, and delighted in his company at convivial hours). Alas! that noble heart, though unchangeable in its active benevolence, had sustained wounds for which this world admitted no cure; too visibly the duke's health declined, and his once buoyant spirit, though it might flicker up for a while at the festive board, was rapidly on the wane. By his deeply-lamented death, our Shepherd lost the best of patrons, who would never have deserted him, and who took a more lively interest in his fate than his no less kind, charitable, and munificent successor could be expected to do. For this there were some obvious reasons. The Shepherd's lines on the death of the Countess of Dalkeith, did honour to his head and heart; there are also some very beautiful verses in his address to Lady Anne Scott, prefixed to a most unreadable prose work, called the "Brownie of Bodsbeck." I would gladly transcribe both poems if I had them within reach.

No poet was ever more grateful to a patron than our worthy Shepherd to the Duke of Buccleugh. He took possession of Altrive with the determina-

tion to be wise, knowing that a small but sure income could be made of it; and that by care and judicious improvements it might yield more. But for such improvements capital would have been needed, which he did not possess; and as the matter stood, a new house was required, a very small one it is true, which was soon finished, and all might have gone well. But in his convivial hours at Edinburgh, the Shepherd had made many acquaintances, not all of them advantageous or well-chosen. In town this was of no consequence; it mattered not much, in his estimation, how the evening hours were whiled away, and during the day time his landlady could, upon occasion, enact the part of Cerberus, and indicate that Mr. Hogg was busy or not at home. Unfortunately, however, when such friends knew that he was quietly established in the country, one after another they took up the notion that it would be vastly pleasant to visit him there, and "see how he got on." They might arrive when he was not at home, it is true; he might be looking after the sheep, or catching fish for dinner, or enjoying a lonely walk to meditate a "grand new article for next number of Maga." But this availed him not; either they took possession of the cottage on pretext of being tired, or they mounted the nearest hill top to look for him, and tracked him out in his solitude. An invitation to dinner

followed of course; they usually arrived towards dinner time, after a very long walk; thereafter, in the words of Burns, "the night drave on wi' sangs and clatter," and as the nearest town was far far away, they must needs remain and bivouac at Altrive, feeling themselves extremely comfortable under the influence of the Shepherd's "whuskey toddy," which of course they did not spare. Such a mode of life would never do. These kind friends had no doubt the best possible intentions, but Hogg, unluckily, had too many such "well-wishers." The cottage was too small for him and them together; inevitably they robbed him of his time; they would not allow him his peaceful mornings to work out his poems on his old broken "sclate." Instead of living on 50*l.* or 60*l.* a year, which Altrive might yield, he would have needed a separate annuity to support the expense of entertaining his guests.

For my own part, I was selfish enough not to be altogether sorry at this, for as I never went to Altrive, I feared we should have lost sight of the Shepherd altogether. The result, however, was very different, for he soon found himself under the necessity of looking to Edinburgh as a place of retirement and refuge. There he was cordially welcomed as a resident in the house of his very sincere friend, John Grieve, of Teviot-row, George-

square, and as business every day called his host abroad, he had the entire house to himself, with store of books and music, from the breakfast hour till dinner time. He was then more with us than ever, having found out by experience who were his most stedfast friends.

I think that era of his residence in Teviot-row was about the happiest of his life, and he revolved numberless literary plans, including the "Jacobite Relics," beginning to collect materials, though the volume was not talked of or published till long afterwards. There was no house, as he averred (not even his "crony" Grieve's), where he felt so much at home as in ours. His habits and fancies were understood and provided for there, and his originalities were occasionally a source of wonder as well as entertainment to those who met him for the first time. He planned music-parties after his own fancy, and tried again and again the notes for his "Border Garland," a collection of his own songs with the music, which was afterwards revised by Nathaniel Gow, and published. It was unjustly neglected; but of that the author recked not. I believe he had no great respect (perhaps none at all) for the judgment of our wise world, and thought the best practical rule for a shepherd-poet was to keep on his way rejoicing, as long as he could, regardless of praise or blame.

I have said that James Hogg was an object of some wonder to those who met him for the first time; *exempli gratia* to our kind friends the late Lord and Lady Macdonald, Sir John Trevelyan, John Kemble, and divers others "from the South," who were habituated to life in London, where such a phenomenon as the Shepherd certainly had never appeared; but where he was flattered and invited *partout*, during a short visit (his first and last), some fourteen years afterwards. Among all our visitors, however, no one so thoroughly appreciated the originality of his character as our ever-respected and unalterable friend, Mrs. Brooke Richmond, in her early years celebrated as the first horse-woman and fox-huntress in England; or, I should say, in the world. On the same principle of active benevolence, and with the same buoyant spirit which would lead her to take the part of any friend fallen in the world, and to assist in the hour of adversity, she delighted in promoting the hilarity of social circles. Three words from *her* voice would at any time rouse the Shepherd to sing the most uproarious of his festive songs. At the risk of being blamed for truism or tautology, I must say again, that Hogg was a character *bien prononcé*, and in his way matchless. Of longer works, he had written and published the "Forest Minstrel," the "Queen's Wake," "Mador

of the Moor," the "Pilgrims of the Sun," "Queen Hynde," "Dramatic Tales," and the "Poetic Mirror," besides countless minor poems and ballads;—in prose were to be reckoned, the "Shepherd's Calendar," the "Brownie of Bodsbeck," the "Three Perils of Man," and "Three Perils of Woman;" besides "Jacobite Relics," with music, and various contributions to "Blackwood's Magazine;" yet after all these extraordinary performances, he remained in his demeanour, appearance, and manner of speech, *integer purus*, the same unalterable Ettrick Shepherd, who but a few years ago had driven his herd of "*nowte*" to All Hallow Fair, and borrowed scraps of paper in the shops to write his first pastorals for the printer. For this genuine decision of character, it is needless to say, how much I honoured him.

It is rather a querulous remark, but one which I suspect has occurred to every autobiographer, namely, on reviewing any epoch of life, *how few* among the social circles can be selected who, properly speaking, have any characters at all; or, if so, who would stand the test of cross-examination on better acquaintance. In our literary world at that time, was one individual who shall here be nameless, and whom I have scarcely seen for many years—one assuredly not without acquirements and talents, and who at all times was on

excellent good terms with himself. Mrs. Brooke Richmond happened to dislike this worthy, and remarked to me one evening:—"His manners are far more objectionable than those of your friend from Ettrick Forest. Hogg is altogether a gentleman compared to *him;* and, what is worse, I am convinced the more you know of that man, the less you will trust him;—he may be clever, but is low-minded, arrogant, and half-bred." Mrs. Richmond discriminated acutely; and in after years I had occasion to prove how correct was her judgment, and how little *soi-disant* education can compensate for inadequacy, either of mother-wit or moral worth.

My own notions of settling altogether at the cottage above Lasswade proved as ineffective as the Shepherd's at Altrive, although by no means for the same reasons. But when the leaves fell, and the blasts of November began to shake our humble roof, there was regularly discovered some especial motive for returning to Edinburgh, which, indeed, became my home for some happy years; years that passed away like an evanescent dream, and are especially dream-like in the retrospect, seeing that amidst the wild vicissitudes of after life, I have lost nearly all the literary productions, correspondence, and memoranda of the period.

I may say, without much boasting, that I was

not idle in those days. Conscious, too, that our annual expense exceeded our income, I thought of means by which inroads on capital might be avoided for the future, and this with a rooted conviction, that continued cheerful labour would at last pave the way to some hitherto neglected vein in the mines of literature. These words I have already used many times in the course of my *notanda*, for the impression, if not a *monomania*, had become what the *savants* abroad call a *fixed* idea, from which I would not swerve. [Moreover, with the help of Alban Butler, I invented the rules of a new order, and had them engraved in cipher on medals, silver and gold, of which I need offer no explanation, being very sure that I should not thereby make any converts or proselytes.]

My expectations were realized at last, by an event which I reflect on as the traveller gratefully remembers an oasis in the desert. This was my acquaintance at Edinburgh with the family of the late Mr. Consul Mitchell, in whom I found friends the most accomplished that I have ever known. All at once I had stores of German literature of recent date; — stores quite as unknown to the English world, as if they had been buried in the ruins of Pompeii or Herculaneum! The discovery of Alladin's lamp could not have been more elating! The feelings of an excavator when

he has turned up some ponderous lumps of Californian gold, are no better than those of a dormouse or an oyster compared with mine at that time. And there was one point from which I am very sure, my kind and accomplished friends derived some amusement, this being from the excessive avidity with which I profited by my lessons, and the eagerness with which I grasped at the treasures of the new world thus opened. "It was," as they observed, "so strange and unexpected to meet with any one who took an interest in such matters!"

My first literary attempt under these flattering auspices, was a translation of Müllner's "Schuld," which I entitled "Guilt; or, The Anniversary," and which, as fast as it progressed, was printed in small quarto by James Ballantyne. I have often wished that I could recover a copy of that volume, as a memento of the happy hours that were spent over it. But, alas! there have been melancholy changes since then; the voice that cheered me most, will be heard on earth no more. On such remembrances, however, I will not dwell, unfitted as they are for the tone of memoranda like these, and I must hasten through my task.

The tragedy of the "Schuld," as Müllner says in his preface, "was the production of a melancholy autumnal month" (*erzeugniss eines trüben*

Herbstmonats). In like manner, and by pleasant coincidence, the translation was the work of some dull October days, when the deepest tints of orange and yellow were on the decaying leaves, when the south-wind moaned gently, and by transient intervals the golden sun shone out from amidst the lowering clouds.

The success of this *brochure* was unexampled. Mr. Blackwood, before he saw the tragedy, was so good as to inform me, that the notion of discovering any important novelties in German literature was a mere delusion, as the mines had been already worked and exhausted. He did not adhere to this *dictum*, however, and as the translation was printed for private distribution only, a review of it, with extracts and notes, by Mr. Lockhart, appeared in next month's magazine, and for this I received Mr. North's fee of twenty guineas. Encouragement, eulogies, and applications for the entire play came to Mr. Blackwood from many quarters. I also received several letters on the subject, from new correspondents in London; the first of them being from Mr. H. Harris, then manager of Covent Garden Theatre, as follows:—

"Covent Garden Theatre, Dec. 21.

"Sir,—I have read a tragedy which you have translated from Müllner, entitled 'The Anniver-

sary.' It appears to me that it contains much force of language and situation, and might be successfully adapted to the English stage. I write this to know whether you have the inclination to do so, as I would much rather that such a production should proceed from the pen of a gentleman who has such a thorough knowledge of the beauties of our language as you seem to possess. An answer, directed to me here, will oblige, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"H. HARRIS."

Mr. Elliston, of Drury Lane, made similar overtures at the same time; his communications being made to me through the late Mr. James Perry, editor of the "Morning Chronicle."

In short, Hofrath Müllner, taking his lonely walks along the sombre banks of the Saale at Weissenfels, did then, unconsciously, excite admiration among the enlightened circles of London and Edinburgh, as much as Goethe with his "Werther" (to his own amazement, no doubt,) had done forty-five years ago. Our literary world is indeed rather queer and eccentric. A little novelty, combined with some force of expression, will at any time rouse it from apathy, and it will continue to cry, *euge, perge*, until the novelty in its turn becomes old, and some new stimulant is

needed. But there was no risk of this truism *telling* on the present occasion against the interests of a translator, for the German stores, both in prose and verse, were and *are* so inexhaustible, that new stimulants might be supplied *ad infinitum*.

So engrossed was I by them, that there remained no time to meet the views of Mr. Harris or Mr. Elliston. For the former, I did indeed prepare an amended version of the "Schuld," in which, among other improvements, I contrived that the inevitable duel betwixt father and son should not take place after but before the discovery of that relationship. As already said, however, the stores of German literature were boundless. My next translation under the same kind auspices, was from the "Ancestress" of Grillparzer; and from thence I proceeded in a series which might possibly enough have continued at intervals up to the present date, had not another series commenced—namely, that of adverse circumstances, by which industry was suspended, and even the fondly-treasured materials at last all wrested from my grasp.

CHAPTER XI.

SERIOUS ILLNESS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT. — PRAISE OF EDINBURGH. — JOHN KEMBLE. — HIS NAIVETE AND DECISION OF CHARACTER.—HIS LITERARY HABITS AND FASTIDIOUSNESS OF TASTE.—THE REV. DR. ANDREW BROWN.—GERMAN LITERATURE. — THE LATE ARCHDEACON WRANGHAM. — SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.—MR. THOMAS HAMILTON.—MR. QUILLINAN.

INSENSIBLY, whilst writing about the year 1817, I have run on to events (if studies can be called such) which did not take place till two years later, an anachronism very natural from association of ideas, and for which I need scarcely apologize. As little need my reader murmur, if I should pass over the years 1818 and 1819 without much of comment, seeing that I then rather avoided society, and did not make many new acquaintances. One event during that epoch made too deep an impression to be left unnoticed, namely, the sudden and severe illness of Sir Walter Scott, whose constitution for the preceding twenty years had seemed invulnerable. Without any premonitory symptoms, the first attack took place when he had a dinner and evening party, to which he

had kindly invited me, but that same day I had company at home. My brother-in-law Colonel George Macdonell, and the Ettrick Shepherd left us at ten o'clock for Sir Walter's house. During dinner, and afterwards, he had appeared in his usual health and spirits, but towards eleven o'clock, greatly to the alarm of Lady Scott, he retired to his room labouring under the first onset of that spasmodic disorder, of which he observed to me afterwards, that in his own belief no one else could have survived pain so great and so frequently recurring. From the beginning to the end of that long battle, though too often physically prostrate, he never once quailed in spirit. Dr. Ross, I think, was either of the party that evening, or came immediately, and by him he sent down a message that nothing would tend more to keep him ill, than to think that his friends were not merry at supper, and it would promote his recovery if Mrs. Henry Siddons would sing another song.

I have said long before, that a man's worth may be tested by the question how much he is missed and mourned after his death; in like manner it may be tried by the degree of anxiety expressed for his recovery while ill. It was on this occasion, as I have elsewhere mentioned, that the Ettrick Shepherd, in walking home that night with James

Ballantyne, gave way to a paroxysm of wrath, and threatened to fling his companion on the pavement for daring to betray his fears that Scott's illness was very serious. Too truly it proved so. Three or four months afterwards, judging by his changed appearance, few among his friends could repress the darkest forebodings. But his tranquil submission to all, *except one*, of the prescribed remedies or cautions, and his indomitable spirit, saved him. He thought not about his illness, but followed implicitly the advice of the medical men on all points, except that of total abstinence from literary labour. The habit of composition had become to him so natural, that he could not abandon it. In every intermission of the disorder, even during its paroxysms, he would keep hold of the thread of his story, making illegible scrawls with a pencil, or dictating, when at the worst, and still resuming the pen at brief intervals. In this way, according to his own avowal, nearly the whole of "Ivanhoe" was composed. I have also heard from John Ballantyne, that the best jokes about Caleb Balderston and the *ménage* at Wolf's Crag, were interrupted in dictation by the most acute sufferings. It was not till the following autumn at Abbotsford, during the long vacation, that by the late Dr. Dick's entirely new mode of treatment, the disorder began to abate. Exercise being

allowed as usual, he was daily assisted to mount his pony, and then moved along supported by a servant on each side. In this melancholy state, his strength exhausted by constantly recurring pain, he persevered for many a day, till at length (in his own words,) he "felt very proud" when he was able once more to ride out with no other companionship but that of the pony, Maida, Mustard, and Ourisk.

I have said that my notice of the years 1818 and 1819 would be short,—I thought often of retiring altogether to the country, but imperceptibly settled down at Edinburgh as our home. For myself, individually, it had not the disadvantages of a town life. Daily, and in the wildest weather, I was in the habit of escaping into the country, never allowing attention to rest on the "stane dykes," or "policy fences," which every where disfigure the landscape; but, contemplating only its bolder and wider features in that varied and rocky district. I do not know any town that makes so beautiful an object at a distance as Edinburgh, nor where life can be spent by a resident, who has a competent fortune, in a manner more tranquil and dream-like. As a poor but apposite illustration of this, I might here bring in a few extracts from those poems which Mr. Wordsworth so kindly criticized—excusable, perhaps, as experimental exercises or

studies, but which have long been deservedly forgotten.

In praise of Edinburgh as a place of residence, memory affords me an illustration which my reader will, probably, think more acceptable than such verses, namely, the predilection shown for it by John Kemble, on his retirement from the stage. Instead of living in lodgings as heretofore, he took a good family house, in Heriot Row, and remained with us for six months; during which time, notwithstanding his hydropathic regimen, he enjoyed the best health and spirits. During my long experience, I have never met with any character more original, decided, and *naïf*, than that of John Kemble. In those respects, assuredly, he might be compared to an old Roman hero of the very best stamp, insomuch that had not accidental circumstances directed his attention to the stage, the same talents and energy of purpose which he manifested there would, doubtless, have raised him to high rank in some other department. Even under adversity he would have been dignified, self-possessed, and distinguished. It was wholly impossible to imagine that under any circumstances, or whatsoever had been his chosen pursuit, he could have subsided into a phasis of mediocrity. Of Garrick it was said, by Goldsmith,—

> "On the stage, always natural, simple, affecting;
> 'Twas never but when he was off, he was acting."

This could not with any truth be applied to Kemble. His taciturnity among strangers, his impressive, slow, measured enunciation, his dignity of demeanour were all unaffected and natural. He was no Proteus like Garrick, consequently the parts which he enacted willingly and *con amore* were few in number, and I am sure he could not have laid aside his own peculiar manner without painful effort, which after all would not have been successful. Even the Ettrick Shepherd was not more free from affectation than John Kemble! He had formed one leading purpose, namely, the study of Shakspeare's heroes, and to this labour of love he found no end; he was deepening his own conceptions and striving to improve his own performance even to the last. The result, as all the world knows, was indeed admirable and unequalled. *Coriolanus* could not despise the mob of Rome more than the great actor despised all considerations, excepting that of rendering justice to his author. Hence his superior and imperturbable dignity. He was an artist of the highest order, and according to Nature, even as Shakspeare himself had been, and in this capacity might have riveted attention by his intellectual energy and modulation of voice alone, even if, instead of possessing great personal advantages, he had been comparatively a dwarf.

I suppose it would have been impossible in all the world to discover two men, of the same profession, more utterly dissimilar on all points than Kemble and Kean. The *Lear* and *Coriolanus* of the former are the parts that dwell indelibly on my remembrance as unequalled. In both of these Kean signally failed; his performance of *Lear* was in comparison a mere travestie, whereas in *Shylock*, or *Sir Giles Overreach*, he found a part suitable to him, and unquestionably produced great effect.

Kemble's intense study of Shakspeare naturally led him to pursuits of literature and bibliography. He heartily loved old books for divers reasons, and specially because among such he could find illustrations of his favourite author. Besides, he had in early life brought away with him from Douay or St. Omer a much better education than usually falls to the lot of Catholic emigrants there; in other words, he profited more than his companions by the opportunities offered. And if he had taken to authorship (luckily for himself he did not!) I feel sure that he would have risen to eminence; but his literary labour, like his acting, would have been confined to some peculiar vein, from which, by indefatigable perseverance, he would have extracted the purest gold. As matters stood he read far more than he wrote,

and took to composition only as an amusement. He was a most rigorous and unrelenting critic, sparing himself least of all; for when employed on his little volume of essays, dedicated to the Duke of Northumberland, it seemed as if he never would have allowed it to emerge through the press to the public eye. He weighed every word, accent, and comma. In truth, his fastidiousness seemed then to act as a torpedo on his faculties; and I suppose a popular author of the present day could scribble up a three volume novel with less of care and pains than Kemble bestowed on this little *brochure.*

In ordinary life, ignorant observers of course utterly mistook the great actor's character, and they were allowed, properly enough, to remain in their ignorance; for he was excessively averse to making new acquaintances, and kept himself aloof under the shield of courteous taciturnity. From his apparent formality of manners, they thought that, like Garrick, he was always acting, and from his natural reserve and dignity of demeanour, they supposed that he was on special good terms with himself, and looked on everybody *de haut en bas.* How different was the truth! Contemptuous and disdainful he might be, but there was nothing he held more in contempt than starch and pretension. Even to the last a persevering student, he was

his own severe task-master, and could have had but little room left in his mind for arrogance. *Malgré* the convivial enjoyments of his early years, he was a man of domestic habits and the simplest manners. On theatrical days he dined at two, then reclined, perhaps slumbered, till five or six, when Mrs. Kemble awakened him for coffee; thereafter dressed, and wrapt in his cloak, was driven to the stage-door. Instead of being an austere formalist, he was one of the quaintest of humorists. Some, who only recollect his foibles, will think that I have said more than enough in praise of our great actor; but every one who knew him, will agree that on all points he showed decision of character, and that as a friend he might be relied on for sincere kindness of heart and stedfast integrity.

It is very needless to say how much his retirement from the stage was regretted and deprecated at Edinburgh, more especially as his professional powers were unimpaired; but his plans were already fixed. One morning, when Sir Walter Scott happened to call in Heriot-row, and was received by Mrs. Kemble, the question arose of his composing a few lines to be spoken as a farewell address, to which the poet replied, that though the will was not wanting, it seemed to him inevitable that in writing *King John's* farewell to the pub-

lic, he should painfully feel that he also was bidding farewell to an old friend. Such feelings could not be tagged into rhymes; therefore, he would not even promise to make a trial, being so very sure that he would fail in the undertaking. Within a short time, however, I believe the very next morning, Mrs. Kemble received the address — one of the most appropriate and beautiful compositions of its kind that has ever appeared.

I am naturally led to dwell on this epoch, because it reminds me of many pleasant hours in social circles. Mr. and Mrs. Kemble now and then dined with us, and also accepted invitations from a very few of our near neighbours whom they met, especially from my kind friend Mr. Alexander Gordon, who entertained profusely—and who then possessed the best private collection of pictures at Edinburgh—pictures which had once hung on the walls of the Colonna palace, at Rome. In the mornings, if the weather allowed, "King John" often looked in when I was at my desk, and without more than the words—"Don't mind me; stick to your day's work," helped himself to a change of old books from my confused shelves, and disappeared. He was careful of books to rigidity, and always placed the returned volumes where he had found them. My visits to him in the morning hours were equally short, for I found him always

occupied; sometimes with a professor of French, from whom he took lessons for practice and improvement, although the language had been familiar to him from early youth. He rightly judged that to obtain a proper command over a foreign language is a purpose that cannot be realized without persevering attention. My friend (in after years) Dr. Becker, of Offenbach, carried this principle still farther, declaring that his efforts to acquire control and mastery over any foreign language would *never* be consummated, seeing that he found far too much to do in trying to fathom the mysterious depth (*geheimnissvolle Tiefe*) of his own!

I suppose that, on principles of mesmerism, *originals* are drawn together, and Kemble had one very singular acquaintance at Edinburgh (in its vicinity rather) whom he always visited—I mean the late Doctor Andrew Brown, professor of "Rhetoric and Belles Lettres." Never, perhaps, did any one lead such a laborious life as Dr. Brown, and pass through the world so completely unnoticed. He was thoroughly a recluse, and for the sake of quiet, lived in a small sheltered villa out of town. My only remembrance of him is that of his fine impressive cast of features as he went across the college court to his lecture-room. But I never happened to meet with any one who

was numbered among his pupils, or who profited by his lectures.

It was said of him, I believe truly, that, like Lord Eldin with his unique historical picture, Dr. Brown had been occupied for thirty years or more, upon one solitary work, namely, a history of America. It was said, also, that his manuscripts, which made together an enormous mass, were in double columns, of which one was at first left blank for emendations; that the Professor worked upon these incessantly; "multa tulit fecitque, sudavit et alsit," and yet all was in vain! The blank columns were indeed filled up; the whole narrative concluded, and written three times over; but the author never was satisfied; after all, he seemed only to have accomplished his "*memoires pour servir*," and, consequently, the work never made its appearance to eclipse the reputation of Dr. Robertson, as it might have done!

I believe it is true enough that the autobiography of a literary man, merely as such, can have little or no interest for any reader. The more he is occupied with his proper employments, the less leisure he has for commenting on the society around him. So called events pass over his mind with diminished influence at the moment, and are but dimly recalled afterwards. Of Johnson, or Goldsmith, in their few *palmy* days, what is there

to record more than that each quietly wrote divers good books or essays, and as quietly partook of good dinners and literary table-talk, such as no one but a Boswell would have thought worth recording; and which, to my fancy, reads vastly well *as an opiate*, and this is all. But their vicissitudes and struggles with adversity have another sort of interest, like Johnson's "Life of Savage," wherein we think not of his literary merits half so much as of his wrongs, and of which it is said that Sir Joshua Reynolds, beginning to read the volume at midnight, stood as if spell-bound and motionless till he had concluded the narrative, when he found himself cramped and the candle expiring.

Accordingly, the years 1819 and 1820 passed over in my own case like a dream, the traces of which are only preserved by the various fragments out of my portfolio, which are in "Blackwood's Magazine," under the title of "Horæ Germanicæ," and "Horæ Danicæ;" a series, of which, from its commencement up to the year 1827, the chapters were all mine, with the exception of two, namely, on Goethe's "Faust," and on a tragedy of La Motte Fouqué. If so disposed I might, without arrogance, bestow some praise on these productions, seeing that the real merit, the "subject matter," belonged solely to the original author; and in relation to them I appeared only as a humble imi-

tator or *redacteur*. Divers of the plays, though not published, were translated entire; and, during the preparation of each, I felt more and more that a new literary world was opened. Besides, original plots and original compositions, of divers character, arose spontaneously in the translator's mind when occupied on these versions.

Their success was not limited to the commencement only, but was progressive. Complimentary letters flowed in, as the series advanced, chiefly, no doubt, because it was then so new and unexpected. Among literary characters who honoured these essays with special approbation was the late Archdeacon Wrangham, one of my kindest friends, but whom, from the force of adverse circumstances, I never personally met. His praise was to me the more valuable and interesting, because he had made the principles of translation one of his own favourite studies. Another distinguished individual whose attention they attracted was the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, who said that he had never, in any poetical work, found the feelings of an artist so well developed as in the "Correggio" of Oehlanschläger. I felt interested in this opinion, because the "Correggio," though the author did not intend it for such, appeared to me the master-piece of a truly original and powerful mind. I recollected the circumstance, therefore, when, some years after-

wards, at a dinner party, *chez* the late author of the "Pleasures of Hope," I happened to be placed next to Sir Thomas Lawrence. He confirmed what I had before understood merely by *on dit*, adding, that he thought the entire play should be translated as a tribute to the cause of art and artists. He then queried much about Oehlanschläger's other writings, and seemed surprised by the fervour with which I spoke of him as the Shakspeare of Denmark, and one of the luminaries of our age.

I have sometimes wondered why the series of dramas which I translated should have been left, as it were, in my own hands up to the present day, but so it is. Others have attempted versions, but ineffectually. For my own part, feeling that when I translated any one of them, fifty more equally interesting were awaiting the same process, I looked upon the printed fragments only as stepping-stones into the deeper mines of German literature. Or to improve the metaphor, they were like a bridge across the dark waters hitherto thought impassable, leading a way into the stupendous cavern, with its glittering stalactites, and its various treasures guarded by Teutonic genii, who would be propitiated by one who came before them humbly, but courageously. However, I set most store, as I do now, by the prose works in Germany, of which

I had once a valuable collection to be used, when time served; but which, as already said, have drifted away out of my grasp for ever.

It seemed in those days as if there would be no end to the laughable mystifications attending "Blackwood's Magazine." Our wise public wondered much that German literature, which they supposed had been exhausted long ago by Monk Lewis, should deserve so much attention, but when the name of Oehlanschläger first appeared (pronounced Scottice *Oilanschlawger*), it was confidently decided that the Danish poet had merely the same sort of existence as Ensign and Adjutant O'Doherty, and further, that his excellent tragedies, together with those reviewed in the "Horæ Germanicæ," were original compositions, at his most leisure moments, of Professor Wilson. * * * * Example is better than precept. In consequence of the mirth excited by the magazine, the pen was taken up, in mere badinage, by individuals who had never before thought of writing a single page for the press. In this manner were traced *currente calamo* the first drolleries of the aforesaid Ensign O'Doherty, respecting whom I suppose no one, and least of all the original author, could then have predicated that he (the Ensign I mean) would live long enough to become a Knight of the Bath, and a Baronet! Mr. Hamil-

ton, as I suppose, thought only of writing a few pages of ridiculous babillage, the Alpha and Omega of his literary prowess; instead of which (perhaps to his own surprise), the result was that he gradually became a voluminous author. His compositions probably (according to the notion of James Hogg), had a will and vitality of their own which carried him on.

In like manner, and in the same careless mood, finding on the table a poetical publication of recent date by Mr. Quillinan, the editor of O'Doherty wrote a ludicrous review of it under the title of "Poems by a Heavy Dragoon;" obviously a "merry andrada" penned after dinner (though it is true, the author seldom imbibed aught stronger than green tea). Not long afterwards, by an odd coincidence, the said "heavy dragoon" found himself quartered on duty with his regiment in Scotland, where returning *in kind* the compliments paid him by O'Doherty, he wrote and published a poem consisting of sarcasm not less humorous than *tranchant*, aimed against Blackwood and his magazine, the modern Athens, the unknown reviewer, indeed against all Scotland. During my long life, I cannot recollect having met with a satire more clever and appropriate than this. It was bitter as the north-east wind in March, and yet very witty and laughable. Im-

mediately on his arrival at Edinburgh, the author sent two copies to Mr. Blackwood, accompanied by his compliments and card of address, at Shaw's Hotel, within two doors of the publisher; an act of courtesy the more marked and significant, inasmuch as Mr. Quillinan had not always been contented with a single antagonist at a time, but when quartered at Canterbury had sent divers challenges, and knocked off two or three hostile encounters on one and the same morning.

It so happened, however, that Captain Hamilton was then in a distant part of the country, and no one at first responded to the call but my insignificant self. The paternity of the obnoxious review had been erroneously ascribed to Mr. Lockhart, and right glad was I when he met Mr. and Mrs. Quillinan at dinner, *chez nous*, within two days afterwards, when the real authorship of the *badinage* was in the course of the evening freely disclosed, and all animosity forgotten. Indeed the balance between poet and reviewer (as between Byron and Jeffrey), had been sufficiently adjusted; for if Mr. Quillinan felt nettled by the critique, he had already used scorpions in retaliation.

Now it is full time, as I suppose, to break this yarn of literary gossip, more twaddly than even the historiettes about Bonnymune, wherewith I commenced these Memoirs. About this time, pro-

bably, the best part of my life was that from which our so-called world was excluded, and the German poets were my only companions, excepting the few kind friends who encouraged my pursuits. I remember especially one autumn (of 1819, I believe), spent quietly in the country, which we did not quit till the November blasts had shaken the last leaves from the trees. Some pleasant reminiscences belong to that year, inasmuch as I was able to contribute, in a humble degree, to avert a serious loss which menaced some of our most valued and respected friends. I recollect, too, one beautiful October day, when Mrs. Brooke Richmond came, accompanied by Mrs. Henry Siddons; and the latter patiently listened for an hour before dinner to my translation from Körner's "Rosamunda;" which in her opinion might have been adapted for the English stage.

CHAPTER XII.

VOYAGE TO HAMBURGH.—REFLECTIONS IN LEITH ROADS.—JOHN CASPAR LAVATER.—PASTIMES ON BOARD SHIP.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF GERMANY AND HOLSTEIN.—NOVELTIES OF LIFE AT HAMBURGH.—MR. COUNSELLOR JACOBSEN.

AND now the scene changes, namely, from *terra firma* to the deck of the good fast-sailing ship, *Elbe;* in which, on the 15th May, 1821, we left Edinburgh for Hamburgh. Steam vessels certainly were not unknown in those days; but as yet the notion of having such for the purpose of crossing the north-sea to Germany, seemed to be as little thought of as if the transit had been equally long with that across the Atlantic to America. Indeed the *mania* for travelling on the continent had not then commenced, and the cost of such migrations very effectually deterred families who had not special motives for the move. Our *plans* were very economical, but for the exclusive use of the best cabins during that short voyage, I paid in advance the sum of 86*l.*: rather a heavy rent-charge, being at the rate of about twenty

guineas per day; but it was considered right and moderate then.

Notwithstanding all my partiality for German books, I never should have acquiesced in this movement, I never should have consented to leave home, had it not been for the suggestions of a dear and lamented relative, the late Mrs. Arthur Clifford, who came from Normandy to visit us in February, and who accompanied us abroad. After six years' residence in France, partly at Paris and Tours, and partly at a *château* near Dieppe, she had learned to detest very thoroughly the manners and habits of England and the English. In truth, the contrast betwixt the two nations is so violent, that I can scarcely suppose it possible for any one of lively feelings to be on good terms with both at once, or in better words, to migrate back from France to Britain without some painful feelings of disappointment and disgust. Our world was, no doubt, vastly respectable *then* as it is *now;* in short, it always is so; and a due respect for its opinions and sentiments used to be reckoned a grand point in our moral training. Most perversely and absurdly, however, from youth to age I never did cherish any profound respect for the world's opinion; in truth, I cared not a rush about it! This was very wrong; there can be no doubt of that, and as little doubt that those who are in

the wrong, are always the most obstinate. According to my wild notions, the world, instead of being respectable, was little better than a stupid, blundering, ignorant beast; not by any means good-tempered either; and the only estimable characters were such as lived rather on bad terms with the monster, and kept themselves aloof and isolated. A popular author might be worthy of the highest estimation; but his popularity was one thing, and his real merit another. On account of the former, I owed him no respect whatsoever; nay, it was rather against than for him, in my estimation.

With sentiments like these, and having done nothing in all my life with the intention of propitiating any one's favour or "good word," I sometimes wonder how it happened, that in those days I met with so much kindness and attention. But I received both, even from individuals with whom, to own the truth, I had scarcely a single idea, purpose, or principle, in common. A querulous, captious censor might indicate a suspicion that the circumstance of my still having "crowns in my purse and goods at home," had something to do with it; although how this fact could possibly weigh with people who, having crowns and goods enough of their own, could not possibly need any help, would remain a mystery not to be unravelled. With a perfect consciousness that sarcasm and cap-

tious censure are odious, I am, however, strongly inclined to believe, that all the moral virtues under the sun, the noblest fortitude, unwearying industry, the purest and best of aims, Faith, Hope, Charity, accomplishments of every kind, in philosophy, languages, music, and the whole cycle of the sciences, will never command respect, indulgence, consideration, even *mercy* from the world of Great Britain, if the "siller crowns" in the purse be wholly deficient. Of this, unfortunately, I have seen divers examples at Edinburgh as well as in London. I have known a whole family possessed of the highest integrity and most brilliant acquirements, who were maligned, traduced, and persecuted almost unto death, because they suffered under wrongs, from which arose a temporary stop in the flow of *argent comptant.*

Divers of such examples are fresh in my remembrance, but I do not particularize them, firstly, because by so doing the nice feelings of some reader or another might possibly be wounded; and secondly, because I feel very certain that our excellent world never has been, and never will be one jot improved by the exposures that, from time to time, have taken place of its doings.

Be all this as it may, that our departure was not unregretted, will appear by the following extracts from a letter addressed to me at Hamburgh by a

sincere and disinterested friend, one of a family to whom (instead of meriting their gratitude), I was under manifold obligations; one whose regard afterwards proved unalienable under all the vicissitudes of our fortune, and whose memory I cherish with heartfelt respect.

"Edinburgh, May 17, 1821.

"Forgive me for already troubling you with a letter; it shall not be long; not so long as my visits used to be, and, therefore, not *quite* so tiresome. I should not intrude upon you with these lines could I bear in silence the grief and disappointment I felt at seeing you, our best and *only* friend, depart without having had the satisfaction of bidding you farewell, and of once more thanking you for all the kindness and friendship you showed us during the short period of our acquaintance. It is true, I dreaded the taking leave of you; yet I felt that the omission of so painful a duty would ever afterwards be to me a cause of sincere regret. I therefore summoned courage and went up to King-street, but the sight of the carriage and Mrs. Gillies's appearance at the door, so overpowered me, that I was obliged for a moment to renounce my purpose. My father and G——, anxious to get a last sight of you, had hastened down to Leith. A faint hope that you

would, perhaps, drive past our house on your way down, kept T—— and me at home; but when the hour fixed for your departure arrived, and no prospect of seeing you, we once more walked up to King-street. I need not describe to you our feelings on finding the house shut, no one to answer our inquiries about you, not a line, not a word left as a token of remembrance to your disconsolate friends. My father and G—— had not yet returned when we got home. There might, perhaps, be a chance of seeing you. We did not hesitate, but hurried down to Leith, where we arrived when the vessel was under way. * * * G—— wrote a few words at the Shipping Company's office, that you might know at least that the good wishes of your friends accompanied you *to the last.*

"How we shall ever be reconciled to this place, —I had almost said to existence,—is a riddle which time alone can solve. Where shall we find friends like you? Indeed I do not know that I should *wish* to find them, as I always lose them either by alienation or separation. But I am not adhering to my promise. It is well that A—— is hurrying me on, otherwise I should give way to my feelings, which I have promised to myself not to do. I only add my best love and respects to Mrs. Gillies and all the family, who I hope will be safe arrived at

Hamburgh when you receive this scrawl. T—— bids me say to Mrs. Gillies that the first nightingale she hears will be a greeting from her, and G—— desires me to ask you whether you think sea-sickness or *** worst? I met him at your door, when I went up for the second time, and could not help feeling for him, who, notwithstanding his being *cast off*, yet was so truly attached to you, and felt such regret at your departure. No regret, however, can equal ours. If you knew how miserable we all are, I am sure you would sympathize with us. My father frets as much as we do; he is quite low-spirited; I can administer no comfort to him. The thought of your being absent, of perhaps never meeting you again, quite overpowers me. Do revive my hopes by saying that you will not long be absent. It is the only news that can give any real satisfaction to,

"Yours, sincerely,

"N. N."

At the beginning of these records, I wrote one hundred and seventy pages about a slide and a snow-storm. I might very well fill up an equal number about the deck of the smack *Elbe*, and our maritime experiences during the next eight hours in the Frith of Forth. Admonished to be on the pier at twelve o'clock, we, however, did not

sail till three, nor did our captain make his appearance on board till nearly eleven at night, the mate's duty meanwhile being to tack about incessantly in Leith Roads. Truly there was time enough for reflection then, but the hours passed merrily. Our own party for Hamburgh mustered in all ten in number, and two of our Edinburgh friends had accompanied us on board, in order to dine once more convivially, and remain with us till the moment of departure.

I cannot remember having left any place of residence, not even excepting London, without deep regret, nor without reflections crowding together in a long intricate web, which it would require patience to unravel. It may be rather a grave thought, therefore unsuitable for table talk, but it seems to me that the prevalent impression on such occasions is not so much leave-taking of a place as leave-taking of life. The past may be like a dream, but situations and events from thence revive at such moments unexpectedly and with a clearness and sharpness (as a painter would say), which they never possessed before. Rather painfully, the fact is established that *so much of life* is done with, and except as regards memory, wound up for ever. The home-hearth is left desolate; the books are on their shelves neglected; the friends whom we daily met are forsaken. If the past could be

recalled; if one could live through it again with the advantages of subsequent and present experience, how many opportunities would be managed and cherished which then seemed of little importance! And besides, on such occasions it almost invariably happens, that the scenes which we forsake, assume attractions such as they hardly ever showed before, as if to reproach us for leaving them. So it was. Edinburgh had never appeared so interesting as on that 15th of May. The sun had never set so beautifully over the well-remembered peaks of Benvoirlich and Benvenu. How long did its ruddy glow linger in the west and in the east, as reflected by the grey, weather-beaten rocks of Arthur's Seat; and how long it was before the moon, instead of remaining like a pale cloud, could bring out her silvery radiance against the lingering tints of twilight!

I have spoken of an intricate web of reflections. At intervals, during that evening, my thoughts ran upon John Caspar Lavater and the Lake of Zurich, a circumstance very natural, inasmuch, as just before leaving home, I had been forcibly and especially reminded of him. Among the latest visitors that I had received at my house in Great King-street were Elouis, the harpist and his family. After many years spent as a teacher in the modern Athens, this worthy man had failed to make a

fortune, and in his old age determined on retiring to his native country. Lavater's "Essays on Physiognomy," in the five quarto volumes, had been one of my favourite books from earliest youth. He afforded a noble example of stedfast affection for home, for his native lakes and mountains, and for long-sustained literary labour. Most truly he was not a man of the world, though at last he commanded its admiration (say rather its gaping wonder) very effectually.

Elouis brought to me all the treasured memorials of his personal acquaintance with Lavater; many little notes and *vers de societé* which had passed betwixt them; the farewell letters dated when the musician and his family were leaving Zurich, also presentation copies of divers minor publications, including the Aphorisms. Looking over these, and hearing Elouis' reminiscences *vivâ voce*, it seemed to me as if all of a sudden Lavater had been recalled from oblivion and the grave, as if I also had personally made acquaintance with the man whose memory I so much respected.

Whilst on the deck of the *Elbe* in Leith-roads, I returned of course from the past to the present. But I thought of the Swiss *Heimweh*, and felt thoroughly convinced that the scenery of Zurich, or Geneva, or Lausanne, or Berne, never could be more beautiful than Edinburgh, its

environs, and the distant Highlands were that evening.

We commenced our voyage with the intention of remaining for some time on the Continent; but I suspect that during these protracted hours of leave-taking, the chain that bound me to a forsaken home, and to the few friends whom I sincerely valued, was woven indissolubly, so that at each remove, its lengthening links became afterwards more perceptible and ponderous.

Our captain at last made his appearance among us, already more than half-seas over; a circumstance of little consequence, as he relied at all times on the prudent management of a sober and active mate. The boat which brought him tarried to convey our Edinburgh friends on shore. They drank a parting glass of *Crambambuli* to our next merry meeting. Thereafter, as their boat shot through the waters, and our ship steadied her course, we interchanged cheers at intervals, till the boat faded from sight, and their voices blended faintly with the rushing of the waters.

Away, away! "Steady she goes," with a moderate and fair wind. The moonlight is powerful now, though but for a short reign, as the sun, which disappeared under the hills in Perthshire, will show signals within an hour or two, of returning over the "east nook of Fife;" but our locality

will be changed long ere then. Away, away ! The isle of Inchkeith has already diminished to a mere speck, among the waves, but the bold outline of Arthur's Seat and of the castle-rock at Edinburgh remains still visible. Within another half hour they also are lost to view, and the steersman says in a dreamy monologue—"Gude bye, auld Reekie," cherishing, no doubt, his own notions of home, however humble, and the ties that recall him thither.

In 1821, it was not quite usual to go sailing about for mere pleasure. Ten years afterwards one might almost say that every cockney who was on good terms with his banker, thought of keeping a yacht and hiring a crew to convey him in fine weather from harbour to harbour. Lord Byron's lines about the bark and the bounding steed became vilified by being on every idler's tongue. One hears less about yachting now; perhaps the thing was overdone, became too common at last, and so went out of fashion. It is, now-a-days, only a truism to say that the movements of a thorough-bred, well-conditioned steed, are not more exhilarating to the rider than those of a tight vessel under a fair and steady beeeze; to which I fear it must be added, that the performance of a vicious contradictory brute, shaken in the shoulders, and on

the worst possible ground, is not more disheartening than are the cranky heavings and strugglings of the same vessel in wild, gloomy weather, when the wind is foul. Early impressions are usually the deepest. I remember vividly what pleasant pastime it was, when all but the watchman and steersman were asleep, to remain on deck and hang on at the forecastle, for the special purpose of enjoying the ship's motion, instead of quarrelling with it, as some people might have done; nor driven from my post, although sometimes a wave, ruder than his predecessor dashed athwart the gunwale. It was worth a slight wetting to enjoy the ceaseless *peripetia* afforded by looking down into the deep, dark abyss, out of which we rose again so joyously amid the wide-spreading, dazzling blaze of coruscations. But in this position, the trait of beauty, which is above all pre-eminent, and of which the spectator never wearies, is the long path, or, rather, broadway of moonlight, on the wild, flickering, world of waters. The moon is right ahead, and we advance directly on this glorious road. Perpetual motion, life, and lustre, are on that track from beginning to end. I do not know why this phenomenon is never so beautifully exampled by the sunlight; but it is not. There is a peculiar life in the waves beneath the moon's radiance which they have not during the glare of day.

During our second day's voyage, we had not only a clear sky, but a warm atmosphere. The breeze freshened, but continued steady. At dinner, much amusement was afforded by the eccentricities of the state-cabin table (a new invention *then*) heaving up and down as it did with admirable regularity on its globular pivot. Over a bottle of John Fergusson's best wine, our friend, Mr. Thomas Buchanan, favoured us with comic songs and recitations. Towards evening, the weather became still more beautiful, and so equable was the ship's motion, that I brought my violin on deck, and to the great amusement of our captain and crew, several reels were danced in tolerable style. Seldom has a blither party serenaded the sunset on the North Sea than ours was that evening, and after supper our mirth was prolonged till one o'clock. Of a voyage so pleasant there is little to record. It was about three o'clock on the morning of the fourth day, that we passed Heligoland. About eleven o'clock we were off Cuxhaven, but so slow was then the progress of a sailing vessel, unassisted by any tug-steamer, on the river Elbe, that we could not reach Hamburgh till the day was far spent.

It is scarcely allowable to write about first impressions of a foreign land. Every cockney is used to such now. In 1821, tourists to Germany

were less numerous, I think, than those to Naples or Constantinople at present. Many a wanderer must have been forcibly struck by the first aspect of land after having been for some days accustomed to the sight of only the sea and sky. How attractive seems then every landward object! Along the green shores of Holstein, every farm-house or cottage, with its group of old alder and willow-trees, came out as effectively as a landscape of Ruysdael or Wynants, or De Hoog, and every one looking on it felt inclined to fancy that its inhabitants were prosperous and contented. As a landscape of Ruysdael? Yes, so it is. Viewed from the water it is very obvious that objects on land appear like a picture. Consequently, in passing the old towns with their steeples and windmills, the hamlets and farm-steadings, we see only the picturesque, and we imagine that the inmates are happy. We cannot hear their discordant voices; we see no traces of their poverty, their discomfort, squalor, and anxieties. Of course the mere picture, the outside of a town affords us no indications of these. If we disembarked there and foraged for a dinner, probably our impressions would be very different.

Towards five o'clock, we were off Reinville's gardens, where all the world of Altona and Hamburgh, having dined long ago, were enjoying the

afternoon *al fresco*, drinking black coffee or black beer in green arbours, and filling the vernal air with tobacco-smoke. Close as Altona is to Hamburgh, a thousand and one things were to be arranged before we disembarked, consequently we dined once more on board, and my first observations on the town of Hamburgh were made in the late twilight, "when lingering day contended with the moon;" the said observations being at the outset picturesque and pleasant, namely on the rows of trees growing and flourishing in the streets. At Wiedemann's hotel on the Jungfernstieg, we found no difficulty of securing apartments. Strangers could be very readily taken in there, and in a twofold sense of the words.

Very truly, a new world! I suppose that the most experienced traveller could scarcely point at two towns more dissimilar in all respects than Edinburgh and Hamburgh, more especially on a Sunday evening. In the former, everywhere the same huge masses of stone and bars of iron, the same ponderous uniformity of streets and houses; and then as for life, the same monotonous regularity and dulness; no music either abroad or within doors (for *that* would be irreligious); no signs of *gaieté du cœur*, for even the rich are sipping claret and brooding on their own dark thoughts almost in silence, and the poor are only

more miserable than usual. The streets look deserted, like those of a city of the dead. It has often been alleged, that at such times one might point and fire a loaded nine-pounder, from St. Andrew's-square along the line of George-street, without risk of injuring any one except, by possibility, a stray hackney coachman with his horses.

At Hamburgh, on the contrary, not only life, but *vivacious* life, or in the strongest sense of their own words, *ein reges leben!* Supposing that our arrival had acted like the intrusion of a walking-stick suddenly poked into an ant-hill, the inhabitants could not have been in a greater commotion; but so little has our said arrival to do with the matter, that except by Herr Wiedemann and his attendants, it is completely unnoticed. Every one is too busy with his own affairs to think of stopping to stare at strangers. Moreover, every one seems in high spirits and in a hurry. Even the tobacco-smokers, emitting volumes of vapour, work post-haste, and every passenger moves at a brisk trot, as if bound for some pleasant assignation. Orders being given to our *gast-wirth* to prepare supper after his own fashion, some of us rambled out to enjoy the bustle. Right opposite to the hotel was (and no doubt is) a wooden octagonal edifice, a sort of jetty over the waters of the *Kleine Alster*, and used as an *estaminet*. Herein

were numberless people at numberless small tables, all, without exception, smoking, so that the lights burned red and dim, like the street lamps of London in the densest November fog. Every one puffed as if his life depended on it. This was too much of a good thing, and we gladly emerged to enjoy the cool night-breeze from the water, under the green lime-trees; also, *en revanche*, to purchase a stock of the best cigars for our own benefit. Still a new world! Everywhere maracaibo-smoke and music. Even the band which performs every evening at the *estaminet* is admirably arranged, and unexceptionably skilful. At Hamburgh, people do not read the newspapers, nor drink black beer, nor smoke their cigars without a musical accompaniment, and this admirably performed. But during our stay, there was one favourite *artiste*, for whom I watched at her accustomed hour every evening. In the twilight about nine o'clock, weather permitting, the syren emerged regularly from a deep subterraneous abode, stationed herself and harp at her own threshold on the Jungfernstieg, where she alternately sung the *volkslieder* of her country and played pieces of the most difficult execution, in a manner which I had never heard equalled in any concert room at Edinburgh. (In those days, foreigners had not acquired, more than we, the

habit of migration.) By way of summing up these favourable impressions during the first hour after our arrival, suffice it to add, that seeing "water, water everywhere," and the houses rising out of it, considering also the music and prevalent gaiety, I fancied that Hamburgh on Sunday evening must resemble Venice in Carnival time. How wide the difference is betwixt the two, it is very needless for me to say.

Early impressions, as I have said, are deepest. First appearances at Algiers or Constantinople, or even at Nineveh, would hardly prove so effective now as those at Hamburgh did then. On our return to Wiedemann's hotel, all was yet strange, and some things disagreeably new. By no means could we admire the cold and almost utterly unfurnished look of the apartments, with their black oaken floors, wherein a huge, ponderous, lumbering secretaire, a very unclassical table, and some ill-contrived chairs, were the only moveables. It seemed as if there prevailed a spirit of antithesis, of opposition to comfort in all ways. The rudest barrack for soldiers could scarcely be more unpromising, and yet we were located at the best and most expensive hotel in Hamburgh. Besides, there were minor novelties that made the house look bedeviled; for example, the strange mechanism instead of an ordinary lock that was attached to

every door, namely, a policeman's baton, whereby was performed the mighty labour of moving the latch! Again, it was quite obvious to all of us, that the dusky floor of our apartment slanted: in other words, that it had a leeward and windward side; but some suspicions were entertained that this must be a delusion caused by the vertigo that remains for some time after a voyage. The doubts were soon removed, however, by our friend Mr. B——, who deposited an orange to windward, which instantly, and with great expedition, rolled away to the opposite wall. I have since met with divers of those slanting floors, but still think that they are objectionable. Supper came punctually, served by a posse of waiters, one of whom spoke French for the edification of my sister-in-law. Taking my chair as president, I found before me (for the first and last time) a remarkable delicacy, namely, *cotelettes de porc à la mode Suedoise*, stewed with asparagus and green peas (preserved I suppose), and seasoned with brown sugar! As our attendant said, it was a *plat* fit for a prince. The "drinks," of course, were unexceptionable.

Next morning proved bright and beautiful; the atmosphere did not seem like that of a town, so pure and fresh were the breezes. The waters of the *Kleine Alster* looked peaceful and pellucid under the clear blue sky. I walked out early to

reconnoitre, and could scarcely have believed myself in the same town,—the crowded, busy, serenading Hamburgh of the preceding night! No maracaibo smoke, nor bands of music now! The inhabitants of all ranks were at their daily labours. The shops were open, and I began then my quest (which was kept up during many days afterwards), for an intelligent bibliopole to supply books and a furnished house to live in; my endeavours in both respects turning out in vain. Any minute description of Hamburgh as it existed in those days, supposing I felt inclined to write one, would after the changes of thirty years, be of little worth. Besides, my leading objects were only to continue my usual studies, and to find some domicile, no matter how humble, in which my family could take refuge, and avoid farther expense, either in travelling or sojourning with Herr Wiedemann. We had brought divers letters of introduction from kind friends at Edinburgh; but I neither accepted invitations to dinner, nor visited public institutions: in short, I was in quest of a quiet home. But this proved impracticable;—day after day I quitted my writing table and explored the town, where furnished lodgings for strangers were then unknown, and the empty houses were always too small or too large, but in both cases extravagantly dear. Horses were hired for the carriage which we brought from

Edinburgh, and many futile excursions made into the country, to the great benefit, however, of Herr Lust, a so-called *haus-maklar*, who rode upon the dicky, and directed our movements.

On those occasions we met with divers pleasant adventures, "right merrie jestes" at the time, but which are not worth recording now. I know not whether it was that the reign of Napoleon, and his amiable general, Davoust, had acted too destructively on Hamburgh and its environs, or from other causes, but whithersoever we directed our steps it seemed as if nothing were in a flourishing state, except the green grass and green trees. The springs of our Edinburgh carriage were well tried upon roads formed in the strictest conformity with Krähwinkel regulations, and which in winter must have been absolutely impassable. And at every deserted villa to which Herr Lust directed our attention, there were traces no doubt of prosperity which *had been*, but which too obviously had passed away. The real aspect of those places contrasted at once dolefully and ludicrously with the house-agent's descriptions; for, according to him, each was a terrestrial paradise. I remember some of these up to the present hour, especially one upon the banks of the Elbe, beyond Altona, a large old mansion with gardens, sloping to the river, and venerable trees, the abode in days of

yore of a wealthy Baron, who had spared no expense.

I was so desirous of settling somewhere, that I should, perhaps, have bargained for this place, had not Mrs. Clifford besought me to recollect how much it would cost to repair and furnish, independently of an inordinate rent which the Baron's representatives now demanded. Truly the bargain was "*eine bedenkliche sache.*" The once beautiful gardens were now a wilderness of weeds. The large and lofty apartments all had that ghastly and ghostly aspect which peculiarly belongs to country houses long deserted; and the costly paper was every where dropping from the walls, having sustained many a winter's frost and damp. Neglect and *disconsolation* prevailed every where—all was sad, except as before said, the bright green leaves, and the notes of the nightingale, who from his "fiery heart," sang perseveringly, though there was no poet to admire his voice, or respond to it in a complimentary sonnet. There was another villa in a different locality, namely, on the opposite shore of the Alster, the property of a venerable senator, who gave us a meeting on the premises; and when we remonstrated on their neglected state, said it was too true, his villa had seen better days; he himself had outlived wife, children, and friends. At eighty-two years of age

his health began to decline, and he had done with the world, not forgetting, however, to wind up by demanding for yearly rent a sum so large that it would have been more than enough for a house entirely furnished and in complete repair. Gradually I became wearied of these excursions, and began preparations for a long journey inland.

If I could have heard of any literary men, especially poets, then at Hamburgh, I might have sacrificed to conviviality, and accepted invitations; but, with the exception of Herr Avocat Jacobsen, of Altona, who had visited London and written a bulky volume about England and the English, no *literateur* came in my way. Mr. Jacobsen received us most kindly; he was, in truth, a veritable original, buoyant in spirits, admirably good-natured, and on the best terms with himself. He favoured us with his company to dinner; after which, while the bottle circulated, I regret to say that on our part the temptations to mirth became too powerful, and were inconsistent with decorum. He spoke incessantly in a language which he called English; (too truly our German was yet worse). But his errors were not so much verbal as accentual; every English word, according to his pronunciation, was remodelled in such degree that it sounded very strange. This alone would have been insufficient to excite risibility; but, unfortunately, the good counsellor had three favourite topics of conversa-

tion, on each of which he could dilate *ad infinitum;* firstly, the personal attractions of his young wife; secondly, descriptive details (endless) of a solemn fête which he had got up in honour of Klopstock, and at which he himself officiated as high priest; thirdly, the comforts, luxuries, and multiform advantages of life at Altona and Hamburgh. The young lady's personal merit being analyzed point by point with scientific precision, this proved too much for my lively sister-in-law, who hid her face with a *serviette*, and Mr. Buchanan, who already suffered internal convulsions, broke out into an uncontrollable *guffaw*. As to Klopstock, whatever had been said and done, the minutest "res gestae," on occasion of a *fête* that had taken place some twenty years ago, were revived for us, although we had never studied the poet's hexameters, nor did by any means agree as to his equality with Milton; lastly, the laudation of the vast comforts and luxuries attainable at Hamburgh, considering our own experience and feelings, was sadly inappropriate. In short, it was not possible to hear the Counsellor on any one of these topics with becoming gravity; but instead of growing angry, he readily laughed in concert. His *bonhommie* was truly unaffected and exemplary—a trait which I think does more honour to his memory than the strictest observance of mere conventional tact could have done.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEPARTURE FROM HAMBURGH.—MR. J. C. MELLISH.—NOVELTIES ON THE ROAD TO BERLIN.—THE LUNENBERG HEATH.—SUPPER AT A GASTHOF.—ARRIVAL AT BERLIN.—DR. J. M. LAPPENBERG.—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRUSSIAN CAPITAL.—HABITS OF THE GERMANS.—THE KING'S THEATRE.

AWAY, away! Ten days had been spent in Hamburgh, without promoting the purposes of economy or study. At that time it surely was a most impracticable place for new settlers, and I think the most expensive town I have ever known, not excepting London. But its manners and habits are no doubt greatly changed since then.

I ought perhaps to have mentioned Mr. Joseph Charles Mellish, then *chargé d'affaires* there, as being among the very few of his order who have ever given their attention sedulously to the language and literature of the country in which they were stationed. So far had Mr. Mellish carried this pursuit, as to compose when at Weimar a number of poetical *jeux d'esprit* in the German language, which were printed handsomely in

quarto. By his advice and that of our friendly bankers, Messrs. Parish and Co., I purchased another carriage, strongly built, and with broad wheels fitted for the sandy deserts on which we were about to travel.

A large sum of *argent comptant* having been paid to Mr. Wiedemann, and our luggage forwarded separately (by water, I suppose) to Dresden, we left Hamburgh *en route* for Berlin. Prepared by various accounts for inconveniences on the road, we yet found them greater than had been anticipated. The first day's journey brought us, about eleven at night, to a hamlet, where as we found only one *gasthof*, affording only one spare bed, rest was out of the question. We tried for refreshments, but had to fall back on our own stores from Herr Wiedemann's larder. I doubt if the place afforded even eggs and bacon, and as for "drinks," we met with none excepting so-called *schnaps*, which perhaps was something very superior, as it tasted like eau de Cologne.—Away, away! Travelling in the month of June is for people in health only an amusement, and those modern tourists who are accustomed to the journey overland to India, and other such undertakings, would laugh contemptuously at our petty discomforts. Next day the real character of the country, namely, of the Lunenberg heath, pre-

sented itself, a monotonous scene of stunted fir, and drift-sand, such as Hoffmann has described in his well-known story of the "Mayorat." In 1821, properly speaking, there was no road; I can scarcely persuade myself that there is one now, seeing that with every breeze of wind the drift-sand rises, and, like snow obliterates every track. The slowness of travelling *en voiture* was here proverbial. Even with six horses to each carriage, we scarcely advanced at a rate of more than three or four miles per hour. Our progress, too, was retarded in consequence of the horses getting entangled among the brush-wood, and having to be caught and brought into order again, which was not accomplished without a tiresome process of cutting and knotting the rope harness.

The second day's journey proved very wearisome, as well as monotonous, and we were willing to believe the postilion's assurances, that towards evening the comforts of an excellent *auberge* would reward our patience: thereby expectation was kept on tenter-hooks; and to the question, numberless times repeated, "how far to the next station?" came always the cheering reply, "*bald, bald,*" or "*gleich gleich,*" (very soon, or, immediately); whilst on all sides we yet beheld only the same dreary solitude, and were serenaded, not by nightingales, but by myriads of bull frogs, rejoicing in

these unfrequented places, and filling the cool, calm air of the summer night with their powerfully-swelling chorus. At last, however, we had decisive symptoms of something new, namely, a portentous blowing of horns, enormous jolting and convulsive efforts at increase of speed. Avowedly we were within hail of the harbour at last; and to the question, "angelangt, nicht wahr?" came the brisk reply, "ja wohl, ja wohl." But in amazement I queried "where is the town?" "Euer gnaden, es ist verbrannt worden!" "But the gasthof, is it burnt also?" "Gott bewahr, es steht noch, ein starkes Gebäude."—(It is standing yet, a strong building). It was, in truth, a strong demonstration of architectural genius; or, as Mr. Pecksniff might say, a very original *notion* of a house, in front tall and gaunt like a tower, and yet with a grotesque resemblance to a human figure, having aloft two oval shaped windows to look like eyes, over which a thatched roof protruded like eyebrows bristly. In the middle a long narrow window represented a nose, with a small square one on either side; while the front door, with its long external stair-case, stood for mouth, chin, and cravat! Farther, this unique edifice was propped up and supported at each corner by tall and stout wooden legs.

First impressions, as I have said twice already,

are the deepest. One week later the style of this house and of its *ménage* would not have excited our wonder;—only in the first instance were such accommodations memorable. Like all German landlords, our host was a fat broad-faced man, with a pipe in his mouth, who boasted the more in proportion as his means of entertainment were slender. Accordingly, he assures me that he has excellent lodgings, that his larder is over-stocked, that as for good liquor, he is himself the greatest *bier brauer*, the Barclay and Perkins of the district; finally, that all is prepared for our reception, although the only preparation consists in this, that Hännchen, roused by the post-boy's horns, has jumped out of bed, and now appears in sad dishabille, with a light in her hand; and Hans has been repeatedly summoned, but still continues snoring.

By a narrow winding stair, and holding by a rope, we ascend to the *salle à manger*, a desolate ghastly room where the window panes are cracked, and the mildewed paper hangs from the walls in lappets. Though the month is rosy June, we shiver with cold, and complaining thereof, are led into a smaller apartment, containing two beds and a porcelain stove of enormous dimensions. It boasts also a table, fashioned seemingly in the days of Barbarossa, being of old black oak with carved

legs; which, from extreme age, have become paralytic and tottering; moreover, it is of remarkable height, whilst per contra, the chairs though inordinately high-backed, are otherwise made like nursery chairs, with seats excessively low, and puffy feather cushions upon which we flop down, and in amazement look up at the lofty table;—in short, the arrangements in this room are an absolute mockery and caricature of comfort.

The German landlord! A chapter might well enough be devoted to the genus of which our present host affords a pleasant specimen. By words, at all events, if not in deeds, he meets and quashes every difficulty. Resolute he is that you shall, *per force*, be comfortable; having predetermined in his mind that you shall pay stoutly for the so-called luxuries which you enjoy. Reckoning on his fingers, like old Caleb, our new friend says, "You shall have superb *coutelots d'agneau*, fish from the lake in the Duke's pleasure-ground, confectionary of every kind, and roasted venison; all that princes could desire for supper;—and as to wine, the reigning Duke himself has none better than there is now in my cellar: I have genuine Johannesberger, Rüdesheimer, and Hochheimer, of every age and price. Aha! here comes Hännchen with the first *entrée*."

This first production was a ragout, composed, I

believe of lamb, pork, veal, beef, or whatever could be got chopped into morsels, and stewed with all sorts of vegetables. As for wine, we had old Rhenish of excellent quality, preserved in bottles of a shape peculiar to the north of Germany. They are extremely tall, and fashioned like a wasp, or elongated hour-glass, as if the inventor pleased himself with the notion of having two bottles joined together, one atop of the other. The drinking-glasses were of a kind which I never observed before nor since, being green in colour, capacious in calibre, but extremely short in stature, like a bulky carcase, having feet without legs. Betwixt these tall grenadier bottles with their waspish waists, and the dwarf, pot-bellied glasses, the contrast was irresistibly ridiculous; and yet more grotesque were the efforts we made to partake of this banquet in an orderly manner, when seated on the low eider-down cushions of the high-backed chairs, and looking up at the lofty table.

Next course presented carp, served in jelly, cold, and a mess of crayfish flanked by sweetmeats (that is, preserved cherries and other trash), the fresh-water crayfish being superior to frogs and snails, principally, inasmuch as they are more disgusting reptiles, and taste more strongly of mud. But the *dénouement*, the climax, was to come, and as the landlord brought in the dish, he an-

nounced it in a tone of great triumph. "*Wild-pret!*" (game) he exclaimed, "*wildpret* for the *herrschafft*, and another bottle of Rüdesheimer, anno. 1765. Here is, indeed, supper for princes! It is a magnificent piece, your Excellency, and has been in sauce for these three months." All this eulogy referred to a dish containing an unsightly mass resembling a huge coal cinder or lump of charcoal, which, however, we were expected to receive with due respect, as equivalent to a superb haunch of venison. It had been pickled for months (in vinegar and honey, I believe) and, as above said, was now roasted into charcoal. It proved edible, nevertheless, and was, therefore, soon consumed. Black bread formed our dessert, and another grenadier bottle of Rüdesheimer concluded the banquet.

Our friend the landlord was quite aware that we then desired to sleep, and that he had promised us beds, although equally aware that there were not more than three unoccupied, which could not well be shared among eight people. Besides, as he observed, "who would think of going to bed unless from illness, after day-break?" His principal purpose was now served, and he felt eager to finger the cash—his demand amounting to the very moderate sum of about four pounds. I, therefore, betook myself to the post-house, indicated by royal or ducal arms, and ordered horses *instanter*, follow-

ing up my demands by pommelling at the door, shouting, and menacing. Another hour brought us once more into travelling array, with six horses to each equipage, the postilions blowing a gay *réveillée* on their bugles, whilst the red glow of the eastern sky heralded the rising sun.

I should scarcely have called to mind those trifling details had it not been that among my papers just now turned up accidentally some old notanda, from which a few scraps were printed many years ago, but are long since forgotten. I cannot, however, forget one minor incident illustrating the kind consideration with which our movements were watched and commented on by certain "friends" at home. Being on the point of starting from the last station betwixt us and Berlin, I was rather annoyed to perceive that eight horses instead of six were attached to each carriage. Remonstrating at such an unusual proceeding, I was informed that the supernumeraries were return-horses belonging to Berlin; for the use of which we should not have to pay one grosschen; in short it was a private arrangement of the postilions wherewith we had nothing to do. The result, in course of time, was a report at Edinburgh that I could not be satisfied without making an *entrée* into Berlin in the grand style of a reigning prince; an example, no doubt, of sinful extravagance and vicious ostentation,

whereas, if I could have entered unobserved, in the guise of a poor poet or poor pedlar, it would have been greatly more convenient and agreeable.

At Berlin we designed to have rested some time, and might have done so, had not the hotel to which we were recommended proved more uncomfortable than our friend Wiedemann's, and much more expensive. Perceiving that our stay would therefore be short, I was at no pains to make literary acquaintances whom I must immediately leave. Our worthy friend, Dr. Lappenberg, whom I had known at Edinburgh in the year 1814, was now among the Berlin *corps diplomatique*, as Hamburgh minister, and came to us daily during our short sojourn; but to his humour it was far more congenial to speak of Scotland and "days o' lang syne," than about the poets and romance writers, by whom my attention was engrossed. With Hoffman's intelligent publisher, Mr. Dümmler, I had arranged matters for a visit to that most extraordinary genius; but Dr. Lappenberg rather disparaged Hoffmann, and my purpose was abandoned; a circumstance which I afterwards much regretted.

Malgré discomfort and extortion at the Sun hotel, "under the lime trees," my recollections are favourable. Too truly, it is not a town well adapted for the reception of strangers. In that respect Frankfort am Mayne, and Dresden, are

much better; but among old notanda I find a long list of necessary provisos for the guidance of English visitors, applicable less or more in all the thirty-two States, and which I fancy are not less appropriate now than they were thirty years ago. Imprimis, strangers must not be too fidgetty about furniture and the interior arrangements of their domicile, otherwise the best of lodgings may appear bewitched or bedeviled; secondly, they must have no dislike to tobacco smoke; thirdly, at dinner they must not entertain any prejudice against such delicacies as *krebsen-suppe* (crayfish soup), venison pickled, larded, and roasted to a cinder, pork chops stewed with green peas and brown sugar, with a hundred other dainties not to be met with in England; fourthly, they must appreciate Rhenish wine as the best of all possible beverages: for it may be relied on that old Hock, or Steinberg, was the liquor to which an eminent German authority refers in his fine moral distich:

> "Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib and Gesang,
> Er bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang."
> (Who loves not woman, wine, and song,
> A fool must be his life-time long):

fifthly, in order to feel comfortable and at home, they must at once conform to the habits of other people; that is to say, must rise and breakfast every day at six o'clock, have *déjeûné à la fourchette*

at ten, dine at one or two o'clock, and spend their evenings at the theatre; sixthly, they should have a taste for German metaphysics, poetry, romances, and the drama, with perfect facility in perusing the best authors; seventhly, a taste for and practical knowledge of concert music; eighthly, a willingness to bear not only with the protracted formalities and numberless courses which will sometimes occur at a German dinner party, but sufficient patience to endure upon occasions that most remarkable and elsewhere unheard-of entertainment called an "esthetical tea;" ninthly, a disposition to talk in German rather than French: for though the latter will pass current in all good society, it is not advisable or preferable. Being well prepared on all these points, the new-comer may derive amusement and edification from a sojourn at any one of the German capitals; but if deficient therein he had better move homewards as soon as convenient, and re-establish himself in the enlightened sphere of Mary-le-bone or St. James's.

I believe, however, that no stranger could here be set down in the principal street, named "Under the lime trees," without being favourably impressed. It is very long and very broad, and in the middle are six rows of flourishing lime-trees, which now, in their brightest and freshest green,

waved in the summer wind. On either side of these is the thoroughfare for carriages. This delightful *allée* for foot passengers, was first planted by a certain electress, in the year 1699, and has been carefully preserved as the chief ornament of the town;—such union of park scenery, with the bustle of the most public and crowded street being peculiar to Berlin. Indeed, it is hardly possible to imagine a more exhilarating promenade, especially for those who are quite aware how much of good society, and what treasures of science and art are concentrated within the immediate neighbourhood of these trees.

If Berlin be rashly compared with Paris, and some other capitals, of course it will suffer by the contrast; but if considered fairly with reference to its great disadvantages of situation and climate, and the multiform improvements which notwithstanding have steadily progressed, it may almost be characterized as the most flourishing town in Europe. Our stay being so short, I cannot try my reader's patience by any account of its public institutions. To visit them properly would find occupation for a month at least, and the mere reckoning of their names would fill two or three pages. Suffice it to add, that in this comparatively small metropolis of three hundred thousand inhabitants, we find not only a *quid pro quo* for every public

society or institute which exists in London, but several to which we cannot boast any equivalent, and which assuredly deserve our imitation. In this respect take, for example, the Berlin Society for the Cultivation of Foreign Literature, an object which, in England, is, comparatively speaking, either neglected altogether, or, if we may judge by the sad paucity of contemporary European works at our public repertories, is held in downright contempt or abomination! Like the Laird of Bonnymune, we have too many books of our own; we do not understand the varieties of foreign literature, and have no great wish to learn.

But there are other points of painful contrast. At our public institutions, well-paid officials are usually tenacious enough of their own comfort and tranquillity. Very animated too they can be after dinner respecting the shade of a "bee's-wing," and the flavour of the liquor in which he floats; but in regard to the main objects of the establishment over which they preside, it is considered allowable to manifest a very dignified reserve and *nonchalance*. At Berlin and other towns in Germany, the superintendant of a museum or library is most frequently a scientific or literary enthusiast, who makes the collection his hobby, and whose conversation, if we can find him at leisure, is far more interesting than all the objects by which he is sur-

rounded. I fancy this remark would be pre-eminently applicable to the Museum at the palace of Montbijou, under the management of Passelacqua, where the collection of Egyptian antiquities, and their systematic arrangement are the most extensive and instructive in any one place in the known world.

But the Royal and other museums at Berlin are numberless. We have, besides the various military, medical, and surgical schools, the Royal University, the Academy of Science and Art, the Society of Arts and Artists' Association, that of Natural History, of Physics, and Geography, a society for the cultivation of the German, and another for that of the Greek language; educational societies, gardeners' and agricultural societies; ditto for the improvement of trades, manufactures, and architecture; ditto for copper-plate engraving, and wood-cuts, with hundreds of others which escape the commentator who writes only from recollection. To all this be it added that there is no town wherein, *mutatis mutandis*, the mechanical arts flourish more than at Berlin.

But, although frequent intercourse with the continent has tended to demolish many an old prejudice, yet I doubt whether up to the present hour we have quite abandoned our notion that the Germans prevalently are heavy, dull, plodding, and phlegmatic,

whereas, compared with the English, their prevailing trait of character would certainly be liveliness and susceptibility rather than dulness and phlegm. Hence the variety of their public amusements, in particular their partiality to constant rural excursions, and to concerts, and petty banquets enjoyed *al fresco*. The German, whatsoever be his rank or pursuits, seems determined always to make the most of his lifetime. Accordingly, he rises every morning at six o'clock, or earlier, when his hot coffee with *milch-brod*—in short, an English breakfast—is punctually in readiness. Thereafter, he proceeds to the fulfilment of whatever duties depend on his own head or handiwork. And be it specially observed, the sad situation of being without pursuit or employment, of being obliged from idleness to say—"when it was morning I wished for the night, and when it was night I sighed for the morning," is almost unknown to the Germans. Idleness is every where held in abhorrence, nay, it is repudiated by the laws under every state. A man may be unfortunate, he may be poor, and loaded with debts and difficulties; but if no charge of laziness or dishonesty can be substantiated against him, the law, instead of crushing and destroying both his mind and body in a jail, as in England, will afford him assistance and protection. The commercial towns of Germany are mostly

all flourishing; but they have no debtors' prisons. The well-being of a state or community, it is there believed, depends on the people's industry and integrity, which also forms the main stay and prop of commercial credit. In England, our system has been to fling both overboard, and trust to the vast advantages of punishment with or without crime, in other words, of *compulsory* idleness and imprisonment for debt.

This beautiful system has been somewhat shaken of late years, but we still cleave to our old notions. Misfortune and fraud are still punished alike by deprivation of liberty, although the whole weight of suffering of course falls on the former. The swindler seldom cares a rush about imprisonment; in fact, he reckoned on it and laid his plans accordingly; he troubles himself quite as little as our legislature with nice discriminations betwixt right and wrong; both are guided by motives of expediency and finance; in this respect our senators have set him an example and are his protectors.

But this is a digression. Our friend, of whom I spoke, having risen and breakfasted at five or six, might very well continue his employments uninterruptedly till one; but it is customary for him to have a *déjeûné à la mode Française*, i. e., a hot ragout and a bottle of good wine, served about half-past nine. At that hour the restaurants are

in full activity. Dinner is served at one o'clock; and for those who choose to follow the example of the Crown, this "principal business of the day," as Dr. Johnson termed it, will cause but a brief suspension of industry; for the King of Prussia's invariable habit, even when he had distinguished guests to dinner, is (or used to be), to rise from table within one hour at the very longest; and as everybody, of course, moved along with him, the Prussian *gourmand* never looked on his majesty's invitation as the harbinger of a feast, but rather of a fast. After dinner, business is resumed, except upon occasions when at a private house there is a grand banquet, when its conclusion naturally merges into the commencement of the evening's amusements, which are the various theatres, the numberless concert rooms, esthetical teas, or excursions into the country. By nine or ten o'clock the theatres are usually closed, and he has time for a quiet promenade under the lime-trees, or for a supper-party from that hour till twelve; but it will be thought remarkable *schwärmerey* (dissipation) if he should sit up later.

Among amusements at Berlin, in 1821, the royal theatre was pre-eminent, being not merely protected by the king, but under his own special management and direction. There is no object under the sun respecting which conclusions the

most opposite possible may not be drawn, according to the lights or shades in which it is placed. Instead of looking at a theatre as being what it elsewhere often is, a school of idleness and vice, why should not its flourishing state be regarded as an evidence of the people's moral culture and civilization ? The negative proposition, at all events, is incontrovertible, that where vice and coarseness prevail in a community, the stage, as such, cannot possibly flourish.

From court circles down to the humblest citizen, the Germans do not regard their theatre as a place for mere idleness and pastime. It may sound odd, but is nevertheless true, that decorum, regularity of demeanour, and silence, are not more carefully preserved by a devout congregation at church, than by the audience, however numerous, in the Royal Opera-house, at Berlin. The Germans look upon their stage as promoting a grand moral and intellectual purpose, towards the accomplishment of which they willingly contribute by all means in their power. For a time the sad and coarse realities of life are thereby banished: in better words, the citizen leaves the wearisome cares of his daily life for the scenes, situations, and sentiments of that other world (in its own way not less real), which is prepared for him by the genius of the poet and musical com-

poser;—consequently it becomes his own sincere wish that the fullest possible effect may be given to this *esthetical* illusion. He loses not merely his own cares, but his vices and coarseness in that intellectual purpose. On the contrary, if truth may be spoken, our English *canaille* carry their depravity along with them to the theatre; they pertinaciously retain it there, and seem to exult in a public opportunity to show how brutally they can behave. Here (at Berlin, I mean), there is no noise nor brawling, nor confusion in the galleries; on the contrary, no voice among the audience is ever raised above the gentlest whisper. Moreover, there are no dress "circles" where parties stare at one another; the audience are kept in a dim twilight, the effect of the lights being so managed that all attention is fixed on the stage, and the *vraisemblance* there is almost perfect. Farther, we do not find that miserable discrepancy betwixt the performance of the favoured and flourishing "stars," and half-starved underlings, which has been too often witnessed in this country, but every actor is perfect and energetic in his part.

How different is all this from the goings-on of a London house, where the glare of light, the parade of dressed people, distracting attention from the scene, and too often the riot and uproar of a brutal mob entirely destroy the illu-

sion, and stamp us in comparison as a nation of barbarians!

During our short stay, I inquired after the Baron and Baroness la Motte Fouqué; but both were in the country. I have expressed already my regret at not seeing Hoffmann, whose health was then broken, and who did not long survive. So rare a combination as was afforded in his case of accomplishments and eccentricity, if it could be paralleled among the sensitive and enthusiastic Germans, I fancy could hardly be met with elsewhere in the world. At once a man of business holding official rank, a first-rate musician and composer, an excellent artist, a most original author, and though stigmatised by detractors for his addiction to wine as a stimulant, yet exhibiting a degree of industry and patience in his various pursuits such as the most ascetic member of a temperance society would find it no easy matter to equal. In all his undertakings he was qualified to excel; but music was his *forte*. This had been his resource in days of poverty and privation, when other employments failed—for superior talents in the management of an orchestra will always command respect in a country where good concert music is regarded almost as a necessary of life. As a limner, he might have excelled in portrait painting, but for the most part confined himself

in practice to bizarre conceptions, and ludicrous caricature.

His literary sketches, grotesque and odd as they all are, yet exhibit a *vivida vis*, a sharpness of outline which no mere voluptuary could impart. In fact, the zest with which he partook of a deviled biscuit and bottle of old wine, may naturally be ascribed to the wear-and-tear caused by his acute feelings, and the ardour with which he followed out any employment. To the same cause no doubt may be imputed Schiller's partiality to a glass of champagne at midnight, after which he would resume his labours, declaiming aloud, and becoming completely identified with his poetical characters.

CHAPTER XIV.

POTZDAM.—SANS SOUCI AND FREDERIC THE GREAT.—DRESDEN. AMENITIES OF LIFE THERE.—MADAME DE QUANDT.—AN ESTHETICAL TEA.—LUDOVIC TIECK.—AN ENGLISH FAMILY.

I CONTINUE to avail myself of my old notes, for some description of our next station, which, of course, was Potzdam, affording to the eye a very welcome change after the sandy deserts of the North, and the flat country immediately surrounding Berlin. The various lakes formed by the river Havel, which environs the little town of Potzdam, contrasting with the wood-crowned hills have an effect on which the poet or landscape-painter delights to dwell. Among the varieties of this town and neighbourhood, the particular scene, the personal sphere of the great Frederic's activity remains nearly as he left it. With mingled sadness and wonder one beholds those petty adornments on the house-fronts, of which the king was especially proud, and to which he always exacted a tribute of approbation from strangers; those houses too which once formed the homes of his

nobility, ministers, and generals, but which are now often tenanted by humble artizans, or may be had for "an old song," by refugees of ruined fortune, who may possibly contrive to live at Potzdam *en prince*, on means which elsewhere would not raise them above the grade of extreme poverty.

Frederic's taste in architecture and landscape gardening was, I suppose, not much better than that exhibited in his poetry; but although no one in all the world would now think of reading the latter, yet almost every tourist will survey with deep interest the pleasure grounds, and so-styled palace of Sans Souci, the whole site of which, when the king commenced his operations, was an unsightly waste or morass. This deserted residence consists merely of a long suite of apartments on the same floor, having in the middle division a handsome marble saloon with a cupola roof. The building stands on an eminence from whence the prospect across the terrace walks of the garden is extensive and beautiful, but it may be doubted whether the indomitable hero of the Seven Years' War ever contemplated it with much affection. That branch of esthetics which relates to the association of our emotions and expressions with the brightness or gloom of the sky, with the verdure or decay of the fields and forests, and all the varied phenomena of external nature, had

been little cultivated in his day. And besides that cultivation is necessary, obviously enough there are persons whose natural sensibility to such impressions is very obtuse, whence, by the by, is derived an important illustration of the difference betwixt mind and the material frame which it animates. If the vivid impressions derivable from external nature depended on sensible organs merely, then every man whose eyesight is unimpaired might be roused by the same scenery to the same degree of inspiration which is evinced by the poet. Every peasant might become a Burns, and of the banditti who surround Schiller's Moor as he gazes on the setting sun, each would be too much occupied with his own monologue to wonder at that of his leader. But "there is another and incomprehensible eye!" And although Wordsworth has apprized us of the "many poets that are sown by Nature, yet wanting the accomplishment of art," I suspect there are also certain individuals to whom the susceptibility for poetical impressions is altogether denied, as in others we find no proper sensibility for music, or aptitude for mathematical calculations.

Within the palace, as most people already know, every article of furniture, and every book on the shelves are said to remain precisely as at the hour of the King's death. On entering his private

apartments, all the painful and repulsive records of Zimmermann as to that event force themselves on memory. There stands his elbow-chair on which for several months he remained both night and day, struggling with disease, but still indulging at intervals in that voracity which of course aggravated every symptom, and occasionally giving vent with bitterness to his conviction that with the disorganization of his earthly frame his existence, or consciousness of existence, must terminate for ever, a conclusion which assuredly is not one jot more in concord with sound philosophy than with religion. And yet the monarch did offer some homage to the greatest of metaphysicians. He proffered worldly promotion to Immanuel Kant, which was declined; but obviously enough the works of that great luminary had remained for him a mere dead letter. In truth, the habits of a king and commander of armies are not very reconcilable with those of a profoundly meditative philosopher. Voltaire's lively productions were more easily comprehensible, and suited him better.

Frederic has perseveringly been styled great, and numberless as are the publications respecting him, it may be allowable to notice once more his leading characteristics. Imitator as he was of the French poets and *soi-disant* philosophers,

yet in the conduct of his own proper affairs, he exhibited in a most extraordinary degree all that pertinacity of purpose and indefatigable industry which are so peculiar to the German character in its best phasis. Thus he afforded one of the few examples which are on record of a spirit so resolute as to be quite unchangeable by the current of events however adverse. Beaten and baffled he might be (and repeatedly was), but this was merely in outward contingencies; the individual man remained precisely the same as if no vicissitude had occurred. In that respect the force of circumstances was tried against him in vain. Signal and direful as the overthrow might be, he would still cleave inexorably to the same purposes, and brandish his broken sword with the unconquerable conviction that ere long he would obtain another.

In order to be convinced how rare is this immutable decision of character, we need only try how many military leaders it is possible to name, who were able to sustain defeat with minds thereby unimpaired, and with spirit still indomitable. The number of those who may claim affinity with Frederic II. in this respect is indeed very small, and among the chosen few old Blücher stands pre-eminent. For having been beaten he seemed to care not a rush, though

during the operation he no doubt resisted most furiously (vide the records of his disaster at Lubeck). The only means whereby it was possible to weaken and upset his mind was by reducing him to a state of idleness. When Prussia submitted to the yoke of Napoleon, Blücher, with all the world against him, stood alone in his obstinately cherished conviction that this degrading state of affairs ought not to be endured, and was not irremediable; but as it proved impossible to obtain sympathy from the Berlin Cabinet, and he was consequently obliged to vent his wrath in mere words, his health declined, and he conducted himself like a madman. It is superfluous to add that when once more mounted, and at the head of a troop, his wonted strength and equanimity returned to him instantly.

My late uncle, Dr. John Gillies, who had been very favourably received by the King at Potsdam, wrote and published a parallel betwixt his character and that of Philip of Macedon, whence I infer that the latter also must have possessed the same rare trait of immutability. This quality has been ascribed, moreover, to Gustaf Adolf, to the Swedish General Banner, and to the eccentric Suarroff, who, being a good musician, chose on one occasion to play the fiddle when leading his troop to a desperate encounter, in which he proved completely victorious.

Among great commanders, Napoleon affords an instance how fatal is the lack of such pertinacity. Elated beyond measure when victorious, ambitious and overbearing then, he could not endure defeat with magnanimity. His disposition seemed to change with changing circumstances. Had it not been for this, and if, after the field of Waterloo, he had still continued to grasp his battle-sword however broken, as old Frederic in a like position would assuredly have done, Napoleon would, in all probability, have been allowed to remain Emperor of the French at least, though no longer despot of all Europe. But his mind changed, and instead of still raising his arm in defiance (for he had yet a strong reserve) one might almost say that he held out his hand pacifically to welcome Ruin, though without any previous calculation how he and Ruin were to rub on together. It may be pleaded, doubtless, that there was no want of courage in all this, and that he contemplated being still great and dignified in his abdication; but the *unity of purpose* was lost, which Frederic, in a like case, would have died rather than abandon.

But enough of such digression, which, however, might be excusable in this place; the Prussian hero's residence having been so often described that I need scarcely say more about it. The

only other room besides the King's, which excites particular interest, is that which used to be occupied by Voltaire; and in which stands his writing-table, inlaid with velvet, once white, but literally daubed and plastered with ink, as if in the fervour of composition, he had numberless times upset his inkpot. (By way of memento of Sans Souci, I took a sketch of this table with its dimensions, and have since had divers others made in the same fashion which proved very useful.) To the north of the palace is the level ground, whereon every morning the monarch was wont to inspect his troops, whom he disciplined in time of peace, as well as of war, with merciless rigidity. On the south is the pleasure garden laid out in the old French or Italian style, with its terraces, fountains, exotic plants, and shady walks, commanding, as already said, a beautiful and extensive landscape, which includes the new park and palace, the peacock island and pyramid, with divers other objects worthy of the stranger's attention, who, by the by, when he returns to the town ought specially to admire the prospect from each of the bridges. Among the favourable traits of Frederic's character, I should incline particularly to reckon his fondness for dogs; and before leaving Sans Souci, every visitor is desired to observe the burial-ground of

his favourites, close by the palace, where their graves are all marked and monuments erected. Besides paintings and statues in the different apartments, there used to be a picture gallery of considerable extent, containing some good specimens of the Italian school; and there is the long narrow gallery extending from end to end of the building, in which the King used to take exercise in bad weather. On the whole, Potzdam appeared to me far more attractive than Berlin. There are divers other palaces to be inspected here besides that of Sans Souci, among which the old and new Schloss stand pre-eminent; and in order to appreciate Frederic's character (which it may be thought I have disparaged) it will be proper to visit the almost numberless public institutions which owe their existence here to his unparalleled zeal and activity. But our stay was too short. I had time only to admire the prospect, to look at Frederic's elbow-chair (not forgetting the clock still indicating the hour at which he died) and to measure Voltaire's writing-table.

Luckily, perhaps, for the reader's patience, my old notes being but a few stray leaves, are snapped short here. From Potzdam to Dresden the roads are rough enough in all conscience, but by this time we have become tolerably well reconciled to our new mode of life. *En route*, we do not

expect to sleep except in the carriages, and as to provisions are well content, if, in addition to the never-failing black beer and black bread, we can have at dinner a *waspish* bottle of old Rhenish, and a lump of venison roasted to a cinder.

Recollection, without old notes, will supply quite enough respecting Wittenberg, which made an indelible though very dream-like impression. Travelling slowly as heretofore, we arrived there late on a gloomy evening, the gloom of which was increased almost to darkness as we drove up the narrow street, the said gloom being deepened also by musical sounds so lugubrious, that I never heard the like before, nor since. It happened to be the first time that we had heard the *possaune* blown from the bartizan of the church tower by way of passing bell, a custom to which we afterwards became familiarised, but I never heard the notes so powerfully dolorous as at Wittenberg. Rather irritated by such an unaccountable reception, I queried sharply at the hotel-door, "Was bedeutet das? *Wer* spielt da hinoben?" In plain English, "What means all this? *Who* plays the trumpet up yonder?" to which with a grin came a response tenfold more mysterious than the music, "*Jemand gestorben;*" in English, "Some one dead!" At all events, I could no longer wonder at the unearthly cadences,

inasmuch as one of the dead was asserted to be the performer!

What Wittenberg may be now, of course I cannot tell, but at that time I think not only Luther's own house, but nearly the whole town was as he left it. The very inhabitants all appeared antiquated, and their costume was still that of the middle ages. The hotel was said to be unexceptionably good, and though the apartments were very small, low-roofed, and ancient, it did afford us beds to rest upon. Our wise world continues to cherish such respect for Luther and the Reformation, that this house must needs hold itself in readiness to provide for the wants of numerous pilgrims. In the register we found the autographs of divers English acquaintances; among the rest, those of Sir William Hamilton and Mr. J. G. Lockhart, who made a tour together through Germany shortly after their studies at Oxford were concluded. The preparation for our entertainment at supper, I remember, included a great number of wax lights on a long table; in other respects the appliances were but meagre. There was, however, an especially strong demonstration of the usual larded venison, roasted black, and accompanied with vinegar and honey for sauce.

Next morning, after a rainy night, had the balmy brightness of June. It was, I remember, a

Sunday morning, and the people came in flocks from the country to their Lutheran devotions. I went out early to reconnoitre, and not even the splendour of the summer sun could prevent me from thinking that this was a town bewitched or bedeviled. Its atmosphere, and that of the environs, must be favourable to longevity, however, for I never beheld so many people as there, moving about like *revenants*, in the extremity of old age. The complicated and elaborate black headgear of the women, with long lappets or pennons, is hideously ugly, grotesque, and disfiguring.

The good people, I suppose, cleave to the memory of Luther and the Lutheran era as having exhibited the *ne plus ultra* of reformation and improvement, therefore resist any notions of modern innovations. This great hero, as is well known from his own letters and memoranda, stickled for good living, *i.e.*, good beer, good wine, and a well-stocked larder. He needed such advantages to sustain him under his manifold labours. But most truly, his notions of comfort in other respects could not have been very complexive; for his ghastly room, with its black panelled walls of oak, looks far more like a place of punishment than the cell of a literary man. How any mortal could have become reconciled to a seat such as his, or worked at such a table, I am unable to imagine;

yet in this room he lived and worked, and with such furniture he was content. There is little reason to doubt of that.

Mild and almost effeminate as were Melanchthon's disposition and habits, compared with those of Luther, his mode of life, judging by his gaunt, ghostly domicile, must have been equally hard. I do not feel much regret at not having attended to the minutiæ of exhibitions at Wittenberg. The necessity of our cicerone's attendance at church interfered with our investigations, and, besides, we were impatient to reach Dresden. Whoso delights in personal memoranda of Luther and the other Reformers, male and female, should provide himself with a set of the "Reformation's Almanach," which contains admirable documentary evidence, with autographs and portraits, not only of the heroes and heroines, but of the rooms in which they lived and flourished. Were it not for our determined and systematic neglect of foreign literature, this excellent work must surely have been translated or imitated, ere now, by some of those enlightened pastors who figure at Exeter Hall.

From Wittenberg we proceeded to Torgau, the scene of one of old Frederic's most desperate battles, and of divers other military adventures, and from thence to Dresden, of which all my recol-

lections, from first to last, are favourable. During the last station, namely, from Meissen, I formed a fixed resolution of settling down in Saxony, and finding a temporary home there, *coûte qui coûte.* Truly the change of scenery proved very cheering; it was a consolation to behold again grey rocky cliffs, fringed with wild oak, birch, and hazel. The manners of the people seemed widely different from those of the Prussians; their language too was far more intelligible, and we were no longer troubled by petty thefts and extortions. There is a spirit (or at all events an appearance) of tranquillity, order, and unanimity in this Catholic town, which cannot be met with in the north. Immediately on crossing the bridge, we found suitable apartments all on one *étage* of the Hôtel de Pologne, almost adjoining to the royal palace, and where the charges, greatly to our satisfaction, were quite moderate, compared with those at Hamburgh and Berlin.

Here a fortnight glided away like a pleasant dream. Being predetermined to remain, I cared not for visiting the lions of Dresden, its picture galleries and museums, but reserved them for enjoyment and study afterwards. Every morning I adhered quietly to my writing-table. The afternoons and summer evenings were devoted to rural excursions, as if we had been at home.

Dream-like as was this epoch, we were not wholly without society, the opportunities for which might have been rapidly followed up, had we felt settled in any home. My friend, Dr. Lappenberg, had supplied us with a letter of introduction to Madame de Quandt, by whom we were most kindly received, and at whose house we found ourselves again the following evening by invitation to a *petit réunion*, at which by special permission we appeared *sans cérémonie* in travelling costume. The house of Madame de Quandt was beautifully situated in part of the royal gardens near to the river, and her establishment such as would in London indicate a revenue of at least 3000*l.* per annum. In the entrance-hall we find liveried servants, exotic plants, paintings and statues. Having ascended to the first floor, we are received in an oddly-shaped saloon or ante-room, in which are several works of art, tables strewed with illustrated books (mostly English) and where we meet only the lady of the house. The *esthetical* party are in the inner apartment, and they now listen to a very beautifully performed air on the harp, accompanied by the voice of a first-rate melodist. The folding-doors are open, through which we observe the company seated and arranged rather formally in a circle; but of this they reck not, for they are seriously absorbed and cri-

tically interested by the music. At first the hostess assigns us chairs in the anteroom, and seats herself by us till the performance is over. When the song is ended, she brings out one after another such members of her party as she thinks we shall most like to become acquainted with, and the introductions having taken place, we are moved into the *salle intérieure*, where our chairs within the circle await us. Refreshments of divers kinds, ices, coffee, liqueurs, &c., are then proffered by the servants. As new comers we attract some notice, and the conversation addressed to us is of course literary and *esthetical*. Especially, a vivid interest is evinced, and searching questions put with respect to the "goings on" of the literary world in England, and to the habits and peculiarities of its leading representatives, but above all, of Sir Walter Scott. For be it especially observed that whilst we remain comparatively stolid and indifferent to the immense variety of literary performances which are brought forth by the Germans, and duly advertised in the Leipsig fair Catalogue, they on the contrary keep a strict watch over all the productions of the British press. No sooner is a new work of any tolerable pretensions announced in London than there arises a competition among German translators, who shall have the first copy, and it is hardly needful to observe

that the versions are for the most part admirably well executed. I brought home for the edification of the good Ettrick Shepherd a translation of his "Shepherd's Calendar," by Fanny Tarnow.

The literary lion of the evening is Ludovic Tieck, whose name, by some chance or another, used to be familiar in this country, though his multifarious writings, up to the present hour, remain as little understood and appreciated among us, as if they had never been published.—(Now-a-days, I think, we talk about him no more. He was, indeed, a man of admirable accomplishments, especially as regards his command over foreign literature, and, judging by his looks and demeanour, must have possessed extraordinary patience and amenity of temper. *En passant*, I may observe that his version of Don Quixote is, without exception, the best that ever was produced. His perfect knowledge of the Spanish language, and that wonderful power of expression (the *biegsamkeit*) which belongs to the German enabled him to bring out every humorous *tournure* with a felicity elsewhere unexampled).—Madame de Quandt is what we term a blue-stocking; her *soirées*, therefore, are strictly literary and musical. This evening, Tieck reads a chapter out of his lectures on the old English school of dramatic poetry, with reference especially to the

precursors of Shakspeare. This being concluded, and having apologised to the company for detaining them so long with his own lucubrations, he submits the question whether it would be agreeable to them to hear the last act of a new drama just completed by one of his literary friends (the Chevalier von Houwald, if I remember right). Having, in the first place, given a brief sketch of the plot from its commencement, he proceeds to read his friend's production with a degree of animation which he had by no means evinced as to his own. The sincerity, force, clearness, and melody, with which he recites the impassioned parts of the dialogue, have an effect irresistibly attractive, the more so as contrasted with his ordinary mildness of tone and *nonchalant* calmness of demeanour. One perceives that he is thoroughly in earnest; that he not only approves what he reads, but is affected by it. Nor do the audience merely pretend to approve and sit "with sad civility and aching heads." They also are interested listeners, and they admire with discrimination.

Such are the only traces in my remembrance of an *esthetical* tea, a sort of re-union,—which, according to habits of life at Dresden, is quite natural and convenient, but which in England would never do at all. In a town, where people

rise and breakfast at six, lunch at ten, dine at one, and take coffee at five, the evening hours are of course a time of perfect leisure for hearing a lecture or being recreated with music. People are wide awake still, and yet the business of the day is closed, consequently they can meet as pleasantly at an *esthetical* tea as they would at the theatre or a promenade in the "Great Garden." But they meet precisely at that hour when in London the turbot and lobster sauce are placed on the table, in other words, when Dr. Johnson's great business of the day is about to begin, and when the notion of tea or of *esthetics*, excepting those of Dr. Kitchener or M. Soyer, would be insufferable.

The only equivalent we have to such an entertainment must be sought in those meetings which occasionally take place betwixt three o'clock and seven in the season, when people who happen not to be in Kensington Gardens or the Park, may pass their time before dinner at a private house, hearing the first canto of a MS. poem, or the rehearsal of a concert. In Germany, the hospitalities of the dinner-table are by no means neglected. On the contrary, what is vulgarly termed *ein grosses tractament*, or "grand spread," is a very operose and artistical affair, but one would as little think of mixing the *esthetics* of Tieck with those of the

dinner or supper table, as of having grouse pie and champagne in one's box at the theatre.

Of Ludovic Tieck, as I never saw him afterwards, my recollections amount merely to this, that neither in countenance nor demeanour did he betray the slightest shade of that eccentricity which often accompanies the literary character. At that time he suffered from chronic rheumatism, and could not move from his chair without pain. In his attire and *tout-ensemble* he exhibited the *cut* of an English country gentleman; his expression of features, as already said, was bland and tranquil, with an indication now and then, by a slight movement of the lips, and twinkle of the eye, that he was not without a disposition to sarcastic humour.

In the *Schloss-gasse*, or Palace-street, wherein is situated our hotel de Pologne, one lives, as it were, under the immediate protection of the court, and partakes of its goings on. The stranger may hear daily the music of the royal chapel, which, *mutatis mutandis*, is hardly inferior to that of the Sistine Chapel at Rome, and he shares all the advantages of the royal picture-gallery (so celebrated throughout Europe), and of the various museums. With such resources, and with daily excursions to the picturesque environs of the town, especially to the shady verdant walks of

the "great garden" (which came in lieu of my favourite Corstorphine hill and Bruntisfield Links) no wonder if time passed pleasantly away like a dream. In regard to a dwelling-house, all difficulties were superseded by Madame de Quandt offering us the use of her own, with its furniture and books for twelve months, at a rent which was by no means immoderate. A contract was prepared which I might sign or cancel, according as our plans should on reflection be decided.

All of a sudden, greatly to the surprise of our host at the hotel de Pologne, and of our few acquaintances, I resolved on leaving Dresden for Frankfort-on-the-Maine. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Clifford, was under the necessity of returning to her family in France, and I could by no means acquiesce in seeing her depart for so long a journey alone. But I set out with the determination of returning to the Saxon capital, which had every attraction of quietness, literary society when wished for, varied scenery, libraries, museums and pictures.

How different were the views and feelings with which I regarded Dresden from those of an English family whom I had occasion to visit just before our departure! I never forgot that interview. Their house was delightfully situated, commanding an extensive view of the Elbe, and

its romantic banks. Having in some degree learned to conform to German early hours, we felt rather surprised to find the family at breakfast, though it was past mid-day. Moreover, they were seated in a room for all the world like the front parlour of a London lodging-house, the floor being clothed with a thick Turkey carpet, and the windows, though it was Midsummer, obscured with drapery of red moreen. Not one vestige of literary occupation was visible here, nor one work of art except a water-colour drawing (not very commendable) of —— Hall, in Yorkshire, which hung over the fire-place, the room having an open chimney instead of a stove. The only mental *pabulum* seemed to be derived from English newspapers, with which tables were littered, and of which a new parcel had just been opened. On the countenances of the inmates, ennui and discontent, deep and uneradicable, were expressed in the most legible characters. It needed not the acumen of Lavater to discover that!

Whatever is in England comprehended under the household word "comfort," they did or might possess in the fullest extent, for Mr. —— possessed an official income, but it was comfort degenerating into downright stagnation. The lessee of this mansion, with its pleasant gardens, had nothing on earth to do (his office being nearly a

sinecure) but to sit here, and spend his income liberally, or save it stingily, as he liked. But he came prejudiced against the Germans. He knew little or nothing of their language, and had never made any adequate efforts to conquer its difficulties. His family shared his ignorance. Moreover, he cared not for music. He was no connoisseur of tobacco; mundungus from a London shop would have suited him as well as Maracaibo; nor would a whole vintage of Steinberg have compensated in his estimation for the want of a bottle of old port, with the bee's wing, from Carbonell's cellar. Moreover, he was evidently one of those worthy people from whom, by nature, is withheld susceptibility for the charms of scenery (the calf sees the blooming meadow with *corporeal* eyes as clear as those of the poet), and though he took his daily ride as far as Meissen, or the borders of the Saxon Switzerland, it was a ride "for the wholesomes" merely, begun with a rueful spirit of mechanical submission, and though glad when it was over, he returned home quite as atrabilious and languid as when he set out.

During our short interview, I was very free in my expressions of contentment with Dresden and its environs, adding indications of regret that, having made engagements at Frankfort, I should be under the necessity to depart forthwith.

"Strange indeed," said he, "what the mere force of novelty will do in some cases!"—(of weak minds, no doubt he would have said). "Had you been doomed to stay here so long as I have done, you would, doubtless, have thought very differently. In the shooting season there is indeed some amusement, though not much, and that has been my chief resource. Heigho! a most dolorous country!"

"But you can have books, music, and good society?"

"Books, plays and music,—very true, but all German, of which I pretend not to understand one word or note. As to society, what can be more wearisome? The only choice is betwixt stiff, proud, formal, pompous nobility, or a set of dreaming, half crazy philosophers, poets and poetesses. Rely on it, the only way, if you are compelled to remain long in this d—d place, is to try as much as possible to forget where you are, and pass as much time as you can in sleep. Last winter was infernally cold, and I seldom got up till three or four o'clock. By the by, when did you leave *town?*"

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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